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THE PILGRIM SHARP; or, THE SOLDIER'S SWEETHEART.

A TRUE STORY OF THE OVERLAND TRAIL.

BY "BUFFALO BILL," (Hon. Wm. F. Cody,)

GOVERNMENT SCOUT AND GUIDE,

AUTHOR OF "THE DEATH TRAILER," "THE GOLD BULLET SPORT," ETC., ETC.



"SAY, STRANGERS, I DRIVES THIS HUSS AND ITS DEAD FOLKS THROUGH ON THIS TRAIL, OR I'LL MAKE A GRAVEYARD RIGHT HERE!"

The Pilgrim Sharp;

OR,

The Soldier's Sweetheart.

A True Story of the Overland Trail.

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CHAPTER I.

THE PILGRIM SHARP.

BACK to the year 1857 we look, and our glance falls upon scenes in the then Far West border—scenes fraught with danger in its worst forms, death in its most appalling shapes, and deeds of daring that made many a man a hero, though clad in the rude dress of a miner or the buck-skin suit of a scout or guide.

My story of a true trail opens in the stirring year of '57, when Leavenworth, Kansas, was the field of busy action, the starting-point to wilder scenes further on toward the land of the setting sun.

It was a rude town in those days, and its citizens were a wild set, reveling in daring adventure, sleeping with arms ready at hand, and with grim death a daily companion; for often, indeed, was the sharp crack of the revolver heard, ringing out above the sounds of merriment by day and by night, and sounding the knell of some poor wretch who had been jostled out of life without a moment's warning.

In a large saloon of Leavenworth, one night, my "owr true tale" opens. The shuffling of cards, rattling of dice, clinking of glasses, murmur of voices and boisterous laughter, in chorus with oaths, were the sounds that were heard:

Some important move was on hand, it was evident, for men came in and departed from the saloon, farewells were spoken, hands were grasped, and rude "God-speeds" were spoken.

Those there assembled were men of the border, miners going to hunt gold toward the setting sun, and miners returning East with snug sums dug from the yielding earth.

Then there were teamsters, belonging to the Overland Trains of Russell, Majors and Waddell, herders, soldiers, gamblers, and last but by no means least, guides, scouts, hunters and trappers, with here and there the red face of an Indian from some friendly tribe.

Before the bar all there met upon a common footing, as they did also around the gambling-table, for the love of whisky made them all akin, and to those who played to win, one man's gold was as good as another's.

Presently there strode into the room a man whose appearance riveted every eye.

He was tall, slender, yet apparently of muscular build, had a clear cut, beardless face, with restless black eyes, and his hair was long, straggling, and of a sandy hue.

But his dress was the most striking, for he wore almost just such an attire as our national figure of "Uncle Sam" is pictured, his head being covered with a white beaver hat, over which had been placed the brim of a broad sombrero, the crown having been cut out for it to fit snugly down upon the narrow rim of the "castor."

About his neck was a stock of black silk and a standing collar, and then came a blue coat, of the "swallow-tail" style, trimmed with brass buttons, a red velvet vest, crossed by a heavy gold chain, and pants with crossed stripes on them large enough to play a game of checkers on.

The pants were strapped down beneath his boots, and altogether he was a remarkable looking personage.

But the strangest thing about him was that he wore no belt of arms.

The closest scrutiny of the crowd, too, failed to detect about him any weapon, as he coolly walked up to the bar and called for:

"Ginger Pop!"

A hush had fallen upon the crowd at his entrance and all distinctly heard the very mild drink which the stranger had demanded, and a rude laugh followed, from such as knew the nature of ginger pop, while those who did not wondered if the saloon had been mistaken for a drug-store and the man was calling for medicine under its medicinal name.

"Now, what in thunder are ginger pop?" asked the bar-keeper, insultingly, for nothing less than straight liquors were to be had at his saloon.

All knew Bruiser Dick, the saloon-keeper, as a man no one cared to trifl with, for he was a huge fellow, an ex-prize-fighter, and could get rid of an ugly customer quicker than any man in Leavenworth.

He always stood behind his bar in fighting trim, and just in front of him, and out of sight of the crowd, every yard or so, hung a Colt's revolver to be seized by his ready hand if needed.

That Bruiser Dick was not pleased with the stranger was evident, and the crowd at once expected some fun, and consequently looked on with silent interest.

"Waal, stranger, ginger pop is a decoction made down East whar I come from, and is drunk by ther crowned heads o' ther whole univarse, and you must be a all-fired greeny not to know it," was the calm reply of the stranger, and his remark brought forth a general laugh.

Bruiser Dick's face flushed, and he replied: "Waal, I don't keep no sich water-tank trash in my serloon, and ef you wants ter keep healthy yer'd better travel back East whar yer come from."

"Oh, I guess I kin keep healthy right here, stranger, so ef you hain't got no pop, give me a lemonade."

"I hain't got no such trashy drinkin'."

"Yer hain't?"

"No."

"Waal, I doesn't tackle hard stuff, so give me some cider, though I hes heerd that cider does lift a man off his legs ef he surrounds too large an abundance of it."

"I hain't got no cider," gruffly responded Bruiser Dick, evidently getting angry to have to admit that his sign—

DICK DOLAN'S

FIRST-CLASS LAY-OUT,

"All Kinds of Drinks Here,"

was a written lie.

"Oh! yer hasn't?"

"Then yer shu'd take in yer sign, fer it has made yer tell me three lies already," was the cool response of the remarkable looking stranger, and in spite of the scowl of the bar-keeper the crowd laughed.

Thus being ridiculed so angered Bruiser Dick that he was seen to suddenly thrust his hand upon one of the revolvers in front of him and then to as quickly draw it back, while he said savagely:

"Say, pard, did you come in here for a row?"

"I guess not, stranger."

"Then what did you come for?"

"Ginger pop," was the innocent reply.

A shout of laughter rung through the saloon at this, and the increasing interest of the situation even stopped the gambling at the tables, all gathering round to enjoy the scene.

"Well, I've got nothing that you drink, so git out," savagely said Bruiser Dick.

"This is a public institootion, I guess."

"Hain't it, stranger?" calmly asked the visitor.

"For men, yes, but not for sich as you," was the angry retort.

"Oh! now do tell what you call me?"

"I give it up; but whatever you is, you've got to git, and git lively."

"I hain't in no hurry, Doctor Tanglefoot," was the laconic response, and again did Bruiser Dick thrust his hand forward, and this time it rose above the bar, and in it was a revolver.

It covered the heart of the stranger, the hammer was drawn back, and Bruiser Dick's hand was upon the trigger, while he said hoarsely:

"Now git out o' this, and dust lively!"

The stranger never flinched, but said calmly:

"Doctor Whisky-slinger, yer see I hes no weapons, and down East whar I hail from, it are said that only a coward will draw on a man as is unarmed."

"That's so!"

"He has you there, Dick!"

"Put up your gun!"

Such were the cries that went round the room, from those who loved fair play, and the last speaker Bruiser Dick turned upon, and instantly covered him with his revolver, while he hissed forth:

"You is armed, Lew Saunders, and as you has made this your funeral, jist sail in."

The man addressed as Lew Saunders was evidently caught off his guard, for a motion to draw his weapon would have caused his death, and therefore he dared not move.

He was a young man, with a pale face, full of suffering, and the look of one against whom the world held a grudge.

The stranger glanced at him, saw that he seemed ill, and came to the rescue with:

"No, it hain't his funeral, but mine, Tanglefoot."

"Death seems ter hev a grip on him now, so take yer hand off, and ef this are yer day ter kill somebody, why jist kill me."

Bruiser Dick was now livid with rage, and again turned upon the Yankee, while he said savagely:

"Waal, as yer has ter be licked, I'll jist do it now and I were a fool ter take a weepin to yer."

With this he put down his revolver, laid his hand upon the bar, and springing lightly over it, a feat that showed great athletic powers, he sent his right fist out straight from the shoulder, aimed at the Yankee's face.

To the surprise of all the blow was caught and turned by the Yankee, who retaliated with a left-hander that sent Bruiser Dick his length upon the floor.

A perfect howl of rage burst from the lips of Bruiser Dick, while a cheer went up from the crowd, as they saw him regain his feet and rush upon his foe like a madman.

But the stranger met him with another blow that staggered him, and following up his advantage sent him once more to the floor.

"Science him, Dick!" shouted one.

"Yes, try ther ring rules on him!"

"Yes, you knows prize-fighting, Dick, so show him you hain't no slouch."

Such were the cries that went up upon all sides, and knowing his powers well, Bruiser Dick squared himself, and came cautiously forward.

The stranger confronted him, seemed very awkward in getting his arms up for defense, but parried a blow aimed at his head, and at the same instant gave one full in the face of the ex-prize-fighter, which once more brought him down.

Again and again the bully arose and rushed to the attack, to be worsted every time, until maddened by the jeers upon every side, and by the pain he suffered, he sprung behind his bar, and seized a revolver, shouting out fiercely:

"Curse yer! this will end yer!"

Hardly had the weapon appeared above the bar, when there came a report, and with a yell of agony Bruiser Dick dropped his revolver, and held up his shattered hand, while he cried:

"Don't shoot ag'in, pard, fer I caves!"

"Who fired that shot?" asked a dozen voices in chorus.

"The Pilgrim Sharp shooted it, out o' his coat-tail pocket, fer that is whar he carries his weepins," called out one man who had seen the quick act of the stranger, upon whom all eyes now turned.

He stood innocently in their midst, one hand thrust in the pocket of his swallow-tail coat, and his eyes fixed upon Bruiser Dick, to whom he said in his cool way:

"I hain't goin' to shoot ag'in, stranger, 'less yer wants me to, so set up ther glasses, an' give ther gents some licker at my expense, an' as yer hain't got no ginger pop, I'll jist suck water."

"Gents, come one, come all, and drink with me, ef Tanglefoot heur hain't too lame ter set 'em up."

"Who yer is, I don't know, and I doesn't care; but I are known as ther Pilgrim Sharp, and I hails from down East."

The cheer that followed showed that the Pilgrim Sharp had made himself "solid" with the citizens of Leavenworth, as represented by those at the "Prize Ring Saloon," and one and all accepted the invitation to "take something" at his expense.

CHAPTER II.

A HEARSE ON A TRAIL.

As the sun rose upon the morning following the scene between the Pilgrim Sharp and Bruiser Dick, its rays fell upon a train of wagons winding their way toward the West.

It was a long line of "prairie schooners," their white tilts glistening in the sunlight, and the voices of the bullwhackers, the cracking of the whips, and trampling of many hoofs mingling together in stirring chorus.

The train had pulled out from its camp near Leavenworth at the first glimmer of dawn, and among those of whom it was made up were visible here and there a number of faces recognizable as having been witnesses of the scene at the saloon the night before, when the eccentric Yankee, calling himself the Pilgrim Sharp, had so easily mastered Bruiser Dick.

In their faces the men showed the evil influence of camp-life in Leavenworth, for the traces of dissipation were very marked upon them; their eyes were red and heavy, and many a pocket was empty, its contents having gone over the gaming-table.

A day or two must pass before the effects of their demoralization would wear off, and then the train-men would be themselves once more, light-hearted, jolly, and willing to face any danger and hardship that they might find in their pathway.

As the rear of the train was disappearing over a slight rise, far back on the trail an object was visible coming on at an easy trot.

It was not a wagon, for it was black, nor was it an ambulance, as its shape was different.

"It are some old famly carridge, thet some gerloot hev stole an' are levantin West in," said a teamster, after a close look at the coming vehicle.

Arriving at a small stream the train came to a halt for the noonday rest, and soon after the object that had attracted the attention of those in the rear now appeared in full view.

As it turned, in following the trail, and a good view was obtained of it, a general exclamation of surprise went up from those of the train, while one voice was heard above all, crying:

"It are a huss, or I are a liar!"

"Yer is right, Monk, it are a dead wagin fer sartin," said another, and instantly a bush fell upon the entire crowd.

In that far land hearse were unknown, but every man in that rude gathering had seen in the past the dismal vehicle that carries the

loved dead to their last resting-place, and memory of some such scene, when a mother, father, brother, wife, sweetheart or sister, had been taken from them welled up, and brought the recollection of how the sacred ashes had been borne in just such a somber carriage to the grave.

As it drew nearer those of the wagon train saw that it was drawn by a pair of spirited animals, and that upon the box was mounted an individual who held the reins with the air of a man who knew how to drive.

"It are the Pilgrim Sharp!"

"Yer is right," said a number of voices in chorus, as their eyes now fell upon the quaint driver, who was indeed the eccentric Yankee who had so cleverly tamed Bruiser Dick in his own saloon.

He was dressed as he had been upon the previous evening, and there appeared about him no sign of a weapon.

In the boot of the hearse were a saddle and bridle, with a box and bag that evidently held provisions.

The hearse was a large vehicle, strongly built, and its sides were impenetrable to the case, while the doors at the rear were secured by a padlock, as though to keep out the too-curious personage who might desire to peep inside.

Drawing rein near the crowd the Pilgrim Sharp called out:

"Waal, strangers, here I is."

"Yas, we see you is; but what in thunder is yer doing with that hearse?" asked a wagon boss, and the question he put was upon every lip.

"Strangers, yer is cur'us as kittens, but seein' as how I hev come ter travel in yer comp'ny fer a little while I don't mind tellin' yer," was the quiet answer of the Pilgrim Sharp.

"Waal, we is pinin' ter hear what yer is doin' with that huss," said one.

"Yer see, strangers, I are a Down-Easter, an' when at home, I were a undertaker.

"But, arter I hed planted about half o' the village whar I live, Death come round callin' at my door, and my wife and leetle one just slipped off with fever, and it just broke me all up."

"But afore the old lady died she told me I hed ter promise her I'd tote her with me, ef I emigrated West, which I hed a notion o' doin'."

"She said ef I didn't carry her out West with me, she and our leetle gal, thent they'd haunt me until kingdom come."

"I swore I'd do it, and so I sold out my stock o' coffins, and I sold 'em cheap, giving a chromo to every purchaser, and throwing in my good will, and tho' I hed a good offer fer ther hearse, I jist kept it, and right in thar are ther sacred remains o' my wife and child, and don't you forget."

"No, I don't intend to forgit it, you bet; but does yer intend ter tote ther stiffs clean out ter whar yer intends ter settle?" asked the wagon boss.

"I does, my friend."

"It are bad luck fer a train ter take stiffs along," remarked a man with a shudder.

"It are wuss luck fer me not ter take 'em, as I kin sw'ar to," replied the Yankee in a tone that showed that there was something behind his words which they could not understand.

"What does yer mean, pard?" asked the wagon boss.

"I swears that I struck one night a lovely place ter start a graveyard, and says I to myself:

"I guesses I'll leave Sue and the little one right here, and pilgrimage back every year ter weep over 'em."

"I set to work digging ther grave, when all of a suddint I heerd a moanin' sound."

"I looked round ter find whar it come from, and Oh Lordy!"

"What was it?" gasped several of his hearers.

"What was it?

"Why it were Sue and the leetle one in ther huss, jist cryin' the'r eyes out at ther thought I was goin' ter leave 'em."

"I opened ther door, and then I seen I were ter be haunted ef I didn't keep my pledge ter Sue, and bury her wherever I made my home."

"What did yer see, pard?"

"What did I see?"

"Why I seen ther spirits o' Sue and ther leetle one, and I jist swore over ag'in, ef they'd git back in the'r coffins and quit prowlin' I'd fetch 'em on, an' I hes done so."

"An' yer intends ter take 'em West with yer?" asked the wagon boss.

"I does."

"Yer is goin' ter settle that?"

"Yes, that is what I intends to do."

"Waal, waal," and the wagon boss seemed troubled, while a silence fell upon all.

In the mean time the Yankee began to unhitch his team in his quiet way, when he was hailed with:

"Hold on thar, pard!"

"Waal, boss, what are the rumpus?" was the quiet response.

"It don't bring no good luck to a train to be

carryin' a stiff along, and I guesses yer'd better turn on the back trail fer Leav'worth ag'in."

"I guess not, stranger, fer I are p'nted fer ther settin' sun an' that is ther way I goes."

"Not with this train, unless yer buries ther cold meat," was the decided answer.

It was evident, by the looks on the faces of the crowd, that the boss of the train gave voice to the feelings of his men, and the Pilgrim seemed to read this expression very quickly.

But he did not show any sign of fear, and replied calmly:

"Strangers, this is a public trail, as I understands it, and I intends ter travel it."

"It would be sartin death fer me to go it alone; but I will keep in the rear o' your train, so as to call on you if I needs aid, for on sociable as yer seems, I guesses yer won't refuse to help a feller mortal out o' ther grab o' Injuns and road-agents, ef they tackle him."

"No, you must go back to Leav'worth," was the decided response.

"I don't do no such thing, for that hain't ther way I'm headed."

"Come, boys, let us bury his stiff, burn his old dead wagon, and give him jist ten minutes to dust," cried a loud voice.

"Ay, ay, that's the music," shouted one.

"When stiffs get ter be cold meat, they hain't got no biz above ground."

"Plant 'em!" cried a third.

That their ideas would be carried out was very evident, for the crowd began to gather around the Pilgrim Sharp.

But suddenly he whipped out two large Colt's revolvers from the tail-pockets of his ancient coat, and with a bound was upon the box of the hearse; and then the Pilgrim Sharp shouted, as he leveled his weapons:

"Say, strangers, I drives this huss and its dead folks through on this trail, or I'll make a graveyard right here!"

CHAPTER III.

THE PILGRIM SHARP'S LITTLE GAME.

THE bold stand taken by the Pilgrim Sharp, against the whole train, had its effect at once.

Many of them had seen his strength and deadly aim at the saloon the night before, and though they did not, as a body, fear him, yet his fearless mien won their admiration, and the boss of the train was the first to cry out:

"Pard, yer has grit, and we doesn't want no trouble with yer."

"Nor does we want them stiffs along to bring us bad luck, so I offers a compromise."

"I am willing ter listen," was the cool reply.

"Well, hunt out a pleasant spot and bury ther dead, and then take yer traps and put 'em in my wagon and go along with us."

"No, I guess not, stranger."

"I goes with poor Sue and ther kid, or I don't go at all."

"Waal, yer can't ring in them stiffs on us."

"I doesn't say I will; but I do say I'll folter yer, ef I hes ter hang back a mile in ther rear, and ter do this I are willing ter fight ef I hes ter."

There was that in the look of the queer genius that showed he was in deadly earnest, and after a few words with some of his men the wagon boss said:

"Waal, it hain't in us ter say yer sha'n't do that; but mind yer, ef yer comes nearer ther train with that huss, yer'll hear suthin' go off."

"One mile ahind us yer stays, and camps when we camps, and so it are fixed."

"I doesn't ask more fer poor Sue and ther leetle one; but I does ask ef I gets into trouble that yer'll give me a lift, fer I is a greenhorn in these parts, and Injuns nigh onto scares me inter fits."

"Yas, ef yer needs help, jist let go one o' yer weepins, and ther boys will come back to yer aid."

"Thankee," and the Yankee seized his reins.

"Does yer want any grub, pard?"

"No, I are fixed."

"Good-day, strangers," and wheeling his hearse the Pilgrim Sharp started on the back trail, just as the train began to pull out after its halt.

Seeing this the Yankee drove to one side and began to unhitch his horses, to prepare for his noonday rest.

And on the train went, leaving him there alone with his ghastly vehicle and its dead, while the one subject upon every lip was the strange man and his stranger companions.

Looking back, as they were disappearing from sight those of the train saw that the hearse-horses were staked out and quietly feeding, while the Pilgrim Sharp was reclining beneath a tree with the utmost unconcern, as though he was not in the least disturbed by being exiled from all companionship with the living.

At nightfall the train went into a pleasant camp, along the banks of a small stream, and soon cheerful camp fires were blazing here and there, and the flavor of broiling meats and boiling coffee filled the air.

A hearty supper was partaken of, and then the train were gathered around the fires for a chat and smoke.

But suddenly, there appeared in the full light of the fire, about which the train boss and his immediate men were seated, none other than the Pilgrim Sharp.

He was smiling, and in his free and easy way said:

"I guesses yer didn't rule me out o' camp, strangers, along with poor Sue and the kid."

"Where is they?" asked the boss in a hoarse whisper, for the gloom of night, and weird shadows cast by the firelight, made all feel a certain superstitious awe.

"In ther hearse."

"And whar is ther huss?"

"Back on ther trail one level mile."

A sigh of relief came from all at this, for though walking in almost daily contact with death, the superstitious bordermen felt a holy horror of that hearse and its load.

"And what does you want heur, pard?"

"Ter be sociable like, stranger."

"Waal, we can't say anything ag'in' that, so sit down thar, and eat suthin'."

"I has had my supper, stranger."

"Waal, we was just goin' ter tackle a leetle game o' keerds."

"Does yer play?"

"A leetle mite, I guess, tho' I am a reg'lar greeny."

"Yer hain't sich a durned fool as yer look," was the blunt reply.

"I want to know," innocently came the response.

"Waal, ef yer takes a hand in our leetle game, yer'll soon know."

"Maybe," was the laconic reply.

The cards were then produced, and the wagon boss, the guide and hunter of the train, and the Pilgrim Sharp sat down to play, while a score of others gathered around to look on, expecting to see the Yankee worsted, for the trio in the game with him were known to be sharp hands with cards, and to play heavily.

"Yer has ther dust, I reckon?" suggested the wagon boss, slightly in doubt.

"A leetle mite," and a leather bag was produced, taken from some spacious receptacle in his attire, and it was seen to be well filled with gold, a sight that raised the Pilgrim Sharp in the estimation of all about him.

"Say a pot o' twenty-five each as a starter, pard?" suggested the boss.

The train men nodded assent, and the Pilgrim Sharp simply tossed that amount down as his share.

Then the game was begun and ended with the Yankee drawing in the stakes.

Another game was played with like result, and a third followed with the hearse-driver the winner.

Every one watched him to see if he did not cheat, and yet not a point could be made against him.

He played with a cunning twinkle in his eyes, and without a word took up his cards and threw them down, raking over his winnings in a manner that seemed to show utter indifference as to whether he lost or won.

As the game went on and the Pilgrim Sharp still continued to win, the hunter drew out with the remark:

"I caves, fer he has sized my pile."

Soon after the guide arose and said:

"Say, pard, yer forces me ter wilt too, fer I hesn't got no more dust ter give away."

But the wagon boss still held on until a couple of games more showed him that luck was all on the side of his adversary, and he remarked:

"I crawfishes too, Pilgrim, an' I guesses we'll hav ter order yer back ter yer huss, and give up ther pleasure o' seein' yer, or thar won't be a man in ther train, herders, bullwhackers and all, wholl bev any dust when we strikes ther army up in Utah."

"Say, pard, let me rastle yer a game or two."

The speaker was a young man of striking appearance, from his gaudy attire, which was half Mexican, half buckskin, and set off his superb form to perfection.

His face was daring, evil in every feature, and stamped with dissipation.

In the train he was known as Trumps, from his always playing a successful game of cards, and in the few months he had hung about Leavenworth, many a poor fellow had made his acquaintance to his cost.

If he had other name he did not speak of it, and when the train had started West, he had engaged as assistant hunter for the trip.

He was well mounted, well armed, and on several occasions had proven that he could win a game of life and death as readily as he could a game of cards, and his unerring aim, added to his great strength, made him an object to be dreaded by his comrades.

"I'd as soon as not, stranger," was the cool reply of the Yankee to the proposal, and the young hunter sat down and drew from his pocket a pack of cards.

"Let me see 'em," quietly said the Yankee, and he took the cards and looked at them so closely, that the hunter asked in an angry tone:

"Don't yer think they is squar' paper?"

"No, stranger; but I don't mind, fer I hes played with wuss and not got left, I guess."

The Pilgrim Sharp.

A laugh followed this announcement, while Trumps said savagely:

"Waal, yer'll git left playin' along with me, fer Trumps are my name clean through."

"I want ter know," and the Pilgrim Sharp looked the picture of innocence.

The game was now begun, the hunter shuffling and dealing, and each man eying the other with the look of a cat watching a mouse.

Around them stood the train-men in silence, their eager faces lighted up by the camp-fires, and the whole scene presenting a strange picture.

"I guesses this is my game," said the Yankee, as he threw down his last card and won.

The hunter made no reply, but his face turned livid, and the crowd drew a long breath, for they expected future developments of a more thrilling order.

This time the Pilgrim Sharp shuffled and dealt, and he did both with a celerity that was remarkable, defying those who watched him to follow his movements.

"I guess yer hes give yerself a winnin' hand this go," growled the hunter.

"Maybe," was the laconic response.

"Waal, we'll see, an' ef yer wins this game, I'll try yer another o' a different kind."

This was certainly no more than a threat, and all seemed to understand it as such excepting the Pilgrim Sharp, who very quietly went on with the game, and at last, as he was about to throw down the last card, which would make him the winner, he held forth his hand on a level with the face of his adversary.

Then the card dropped from his fingers, while a quick movement of his deft fingers, suddenly drew from his sleeve a derringer, which covered the face of the hunter in a twinkling, while he said in his drawling way:

"I hes won, stranger, so what are ther other leetle game yer was goin' ter learn me ter play?"

CHAPTER IV.

CONFRONTING AN UNEXPECTED FOE.

THAT Trumps, the hunter and gambler, was fairly caught, not one of the train-men could deny.

He himself realized that most fully, and where he had intended to have bullied the Pilgrim Sharp into returning his money, he had been mastered most cleverly, and saw but one way out of the scrape.

A borderman, when taken at a disadvantage, is generally very quick to acknowledge himself beaten, for delays, even of a second or two, are most dangerous, and this Trumps knew full well, so he said with as good grace as possible:

"Yer hev won ther game, pard, and I takes a back seat."

The Pilgrim Sharp instantly lowered his hand, and laid the weapon before him, while he began to pocket his winnings, which were considerable.

Seeing that he was apparently absorbed in his work, and taking advantage of the confusion now reigning about him, the young hunter quickly dropped his hand upon his revolver to draw it.

But, like a flash the right hand of the Pilgrim Sharp shot out, and his iron fist fell square in the face of the hunter, and with such stunning force that he was knocked backward into the crowd, his revolver falling from his hand.

At the same time the Pilgrim Sharp arose and said:

"I guess I'll go back ter camp, strangers; but I'll see yer ag'in some other pleasant evening, and yer kin hev some more fun with me."

Without another word he strode away, while Trumps was gathering himself up in a half-dazed way, and swearing to be avenged upon the Yankee for the humiliation he had brought upon him.

For a long time the Pilgrim Sharp was the subject of conversation about the camp fires; but at last the train-men sought their blankets, and deep silence fell upon the bivouac.

Half an hour thus passed in a stillness that could be felt, and then a form was seen to rise from beneath the shelter of a tree, and glide quietly away out of the glimmer of the camp-fires.

Then another dark form followed from another point, and again a third, and a fourth were seen.

Silently they left the camp, and apparently without being seen by others, gained its outskirts.

Making a *détour* they avoided the guards, and struck off upon the back trail toward Leavenworth.

As they emerged from the timber it could be seen, by the starlight, that one of the secretly moving quartette was none other than Trumps the hunter.

The others were his pards, and their destination the few words they uttered made evident.

"Yer don't think he hes stiffs then in ther old huss?" said one in a low tone, as they walked along on the back trail.

"No, I doesn't," answered Trumps, whom he had addressed.

"Yer see he may play green, but he hain't no fool, I'll sw'ar."

"He looks it, pard."

"Yas, and looks is most deceivin', as I kin sw'ar."

"Yer see, my idee are that he hev got some treasure in ther old huss."

"Treasure?" cried all in surprise.

"Yas."

"He may be carryin' Government money ter pay off ther army that is gone ter fight ther Mormons."

"That are so," said one.

"And he may hev struck it rich himself, and be carryin' his dust out ter whar he intends ter settle; but I doesn't believe he hev got stiffs in ther huss."

"So yer intends ter find out, Trumps?"

"Thet are jist ther size of it, pard."

"Will yer attack him squar?"

"No, fer some o' us w'u'd git hurted, fer he hain't no slouch with weepins, I are sartin, while ther hain't a bull in ther outfit kin kick harder than he kin hit, as I hes reason ter know."

"Yas, he laid you out cold fer a minute, Trumps."

"Well, he did, and I thought I hed been struck by lightnin'; but I are on ther trail o' revenge and so ther blow he g'i'n me don't hurt so powerful bad jist now."

"Does yer intend ter drop him in his blanket, as he are lyin', pard?"

"Yas, and then we'll see what ther huss has got in it, an' ef it hain't treasure, why ther Pilgrim Sharp hev got dust enough ter pay us fer ther leetle work."

Having thus decided upon their deadly and devilish work, the four intended assassins went on silently for some distance until a mile had been covered, and they felt confident that the Pilgrim Sharp must have gone into his solitary camp in a clump of timber not far distant, and which they knew was upon the banks of a small stream.

Gaining the stream, they cautiously approached, and soon detected the glimmer of a camp-fire that had burned low.

Nearer and nearer they crept, until soon they saw the two horses staked out to feed, and caught sight of the somber vehicle with its ghastly load, backed up close to the fire.

Beneath it, the flickering firelight revealed what appeared to be a human form rolled in blankets and apparently slumbering sweetly, notwithstanding his ghastly quarters.

"It are best not ter do no shootin' if we don't hever," whispered Trumps.

"Yas; it might be heerd at ther camp and give us away," responded one of his villainous allies.

"Then we'll jist slip in on him and do ther biz with ther knife; but ef he shows signs o' wakin' up, jist let him hev ther lead, fer I hav a idee that he are a dangersome gerloot ter rile."

Following this advice, the four men crept forward with the stealthy tread of panthers stealing upon their prey.

Nearer and nearer, without a sound to break the silence, until they were within thirty feet of their intended victim.

Not a twig was trod upon, not a word was uttered, and they halted, feeling that they had all their own way, for did their victim move then his death must instantly follow, for four revolvers were held in four merciless hands ready to dispatch him:

Hark!

All started as a sound broke upon their ears. More tightly they grasped their revolvers, which were now thrust forward with aim.

They had heard a sound, and listening attentively, soon discovered that it was nothing more than a good snore.

Recognizing the sound, they breathed more freely, and again moved forward, now drawing their knives for the work in hand, yet still holding to their revolvers.

Nearer and nearer they crept, the snoring giving them assurance that the sleeper slept most soundly.

But suddenly, with just such a snort as a good, healthy snorer will sometimes give, the sleeper seemed to awake with a start, for the blankets were seen to move violently.

Instantly four weapons flashed together, and a deep groan followed, as the quartette of assassins sprung forward.

But hardly had they taken a couple of leaps when, with a crash, the doors of the hearse were thrown open, and a form clad in a shroud sprung out and confronted them, the arms waving them off.

With yells of terror the four villains turned and bounded away through the timber, going at a pace that was terrific, and not once looking behind them to see the specter that had confronted them in their deadly werk, but only anxious to regain their camp and safety.

CHAPTER V.

TRUMPS RECEIVES A SET-BACK.

AGAIN did the wagon train pull out of camp, the morning after the scenes related in the foregoing chapter, and through the day kept toiling along on its westward march.

Trump and his three allies in the plot for the

assassination of the Pilgrim Sharp were on duty, yet seemed to look haggard and weary, while they had little to say, the young hunter being particularly sullen, a fact set down by the train-men to the bruises on his face at the hands of the hearse-driver.

Once within the shelter of the camp, after their wild flight and fight, the four had talked over the apparition, yet arrived at only one conclusion, and that was that the dead wife had come out of her coffin to avenge the death of her husband at their hands.

That the ghost was that of a woman all seemed to agree upon, as they had caught sight of a snow-white face and long hair, as the fire-light flickered upon the ghastly form.

Deciding to keep the affair a secret, they had sought their blankets, but not to a single one of the four would slumber come, for the moment they closed their eyes the hideous phantom appeared before them.

Although worn out, for they had not recovered from their dissipation and carousing in Leavenworth, they regretted to see night come on, and kept close to the camp-fires as soon as they flamed brightly up.

After supper the train-men sought their respective haunts, to enjoy a song, a game of cards, a smoke, or a chat, and Trumps wended his way to the head quarters, as the camp of the wagon boss was called.

He hoped to get into a game of cards, and thus drown his thoughts.

"Captain Sam, as the wagon boss was called, was always rough and ready for a game, lose or win, and bade the hunter to sit down with himself and several others who had come for a like purpose, while he added:

"I shu'dn't wonder ef that Pilgrim Sharp come inter camp ag'in ter night, and win our leetle pile, pard."

Trumps shuddered, and glanced quickly over his shoulder, as though fearing to see the ghost of the Pilgrim Sharp, while Leather Hoof, the guide remarked:

"Waal, ef he puts in, I draws out, fer tho' I can't say as he cheats, he hes a way o' snakin' in dust arter ther turn o' a game that makes me wilt."

"He sartingly got the game off o' you, Trumps," said Captain Sam.

But the hunter made no reply and the game was begun, played through, and Trumps was the winner.

"Strangers, kin I get inter yer leetle game?"

All started at the voice, while the young hunter, glancing over his shoulder uttered a cry of terror and bounded clear over the guide who was in front of him, while turning quickly, he was drawing his revolver when he saw that he was already covered, and heard the stern words:

"Sit down, thar, pard, and don't act as tho' yer hed seen a ghost."

It was none other than the Pilgrim Sharp, and by no means in ghostly form, but looking his queer and natural self.

As the hunter's trembling hand still clung to his revolver, the Yankee continued:

"Drop that weapon, stranger, and hev a friendly game, fer I are lonesome over in my camp, and jist come over on a leetle visit, and don't want no trouble."

"Yes, Trumps, put up yer gun and don't have no foolishness, just because you got squarely beat at yer own game."

"Come, I wants peace in this heur camp, and I intends to hev it, or thar'll be cold meat round heur fer coyotes ter tackle," said Captain Sam, in a tone that all knew he meant.

"Waal, cap'n, yer kin count me out o' any game with that pilgrim, so let him take my hand, for I seeks my blanket I does," and so saying the hunter turned upon his heel and strode away.

"Yer must keep yer eye on him, Pilgrim pard," said Captain Sam.

"Is he bad?" innocently asked the Yankee.

"Ther wust in ther deck, and he means you harm, I'm thinkin', but ef he calls in yer chips while yer is ther guest o' this camp, I'll hev ther boys h'ist him at ther end o' a lariat."

"I want ter know."

"Waal, yer won't know, but I'll do it all the same, ef he kills yer."

"Maybe I hed better kill him and save trouble, stranger."

"No, I don't want none o' that, only keep yer eyes open, and don't let him git ther drop on yer for he'll kill yer sart'in."

"Like as not."

"Now, maybe you'd like ter play a leetle game jist fer fun."

"Yas, but you gits all ther fun."

"Like as not; but luck might change, maybe."

"We'll try it on anyhow ef we go broke," said Leather Hoof, the guide, and once more the game was begun, and the train-men, feeling a deeper interest in the stranger and his playing, than in their own amusements, gathered around to look on.

After playing an hour the Pilgrim Sharp arose, again a winner, to the chagrin of his adversaries.

"Well, I'll hunt my camp, cap'n; but I'll give

yer another chance at me all along the trail," he said, carelessly.

"Tain't no use, fer yer'll hev every bit o' dust in ther hull outfit afore we strike the Platte; but yer is welcome, all the same," said Captain Sam disconsolately.

"Thankee, and I'll be glad ter see yer back in my camp, any night yer feels like enj'yin' yerself."

"Enj'yin' yerself thar?" asked Leather Hoof in surprise.

"Just as like as not, stranger."

"With that buss thar?"

"Sart'in."

"And ther stiffs o' ther woman and kid?"

"Yas, they won't hurt yer."

The old guide shook his head, while Antelope Abe, the chief hunter of the train, and who had lost heavily to the Yankee, said:

"Ef it was ter win all yer hed got from us, I'd not come thar, fer, tho' I hain't afeard ter kill, when ther time comes ter hev it ter do, I is scared o' dead folks, an' 'specially o' wimmin."

"Waal, cap'n, you'll come over some night, and fetch along some o' ther boys as likes a leetle game."

"I'm durned ef I do, pard, speakin' fer myself; but ther boys kin go over callin', ef they've a mind ter."

"But don't yer mind ef some o' ther lay-out returns yer visits, fer you keep a-comin' right along, and hev yer eye peeled fer that limb, Trumps, fer he means yer mischief."

The Pilgrim Sport made no reply and took his departure, walking out of camp in a listless kind of way, though a close observer might have seen that he was ready for a surprise, and had both eyes and ears wide open to every tree, bush and sound, as though expecting an enemy.

CHAPTER VI.

A WEIRD SPECTACLE.

WHEN Trumps walked away from the campfire, where the Pilgrim Sharp had appeared, greatly to his horror, he at once sought his three confederates in crime, and beckoned to them to follow him.

It was unnecessary for him to tell them that their supposed dead man was alive, for they had already heard of the Yankee's arrival in camp, and were as nonplussed about it as was Trumps.

After the three had gotten out of sight and ear-shot of the outfit, they halted, and the leader said quietly:

"Pards, we missed him."

"Yas, he are over thar, winnin' dust from them as plays with him," responded one.

"Yet we got in our lead in ther right place," said another.

"Guess it wasn't him we shot at," put in Trumps.

"Who then?"

"Some pard o' his."

"He hain't got no pard, savin' it be ther dead woman an' kid."

"So he says, but I guess he hes, fer ef not, who were it we kilt that were lyin' under ther buss?"

"Thet are so, pard Trumps; but I hes a idee that ther geroot hain't human," and the man spoke in a whisper.

"What in thunder are he then, Gil?" and all started at this horrible suggestion.

"I hes heerd how ther devil, in olden times, tuk men shapes an' went round ther earth, an' durned ef I don't believe he are Satan in disguise."

"No, no, them days o' superstition are passed, pard," and Trumps shook his head to show that such a thing could not be possible.

"You is ther best hand at keerds, Trumps, on this heur border, hain't yer?" asked the man, who feared that the devil was masquerading in the person of the Pilgrim Sharp.

"Yas, they say what I can't win on, squar'. I kin by fingerin' ther keerds," and Trumps seemed gratified by his reputation as a card cheat.

"Yas: well, yer didn't win nothing from him, did yer?"

"No, he tuk ther pile."

"Every time!"

"Yas, every time."

"Yer is lightning on ther shoot, too, Trumps, and bain't no baby ter handle nuther."

"Yas, I are worth suthin' in a row."

"Waal, he got ther drop on yer last night, and yer went down under his blow same as a ten-pin under a ball."

"Then he doesn't carry no weepins, as anybody kin see, but he hes allus got 'em at his finger-ends when he needs 'em, fer I seen his row with Bruiser Dick."

"And this makes yer think he are not human?"

"Yas."

"I'll hev ter hev better proof o' what he kin do, 'fore I believes it of him."

"Waal, it stands ter reason that a man who drives a buss out heur, with two dead bodies in it, an' does what he do, hain't human in my mind."

"He are a queer one, I admits; but I are now

goin' ter see what his camp are like when he hain't thar," said Trumps boldly.

"Yer is?" gasped the three in chorus.

"We is, fer you goes with me, pard."

This information did not seem to strike the three villains thus selected for the exploring expedition very favorably, as their silence showed, and seeing it, Trumps continued:

"Yer see, he are playin' keerds now yonder in ther lay-out, and it'll be a clean two hours afore he leaves camp, so we hes thet time to find his outfit and look through it."

"But ther ghost?" whispered one.

"Waal, we'll see ef thar is a ghost thar when he are away."

"An' ef thar be?"

"Then I guesses we'll make tracks ag'in fer camp, ef we can't skeer the ghost."

"Skeer ther ghost, Trumps?

"Is yer gone clean mad?"

"No, Gil, I hain't; but I wants ter find out about this Pilgrim, an' I are willin' ter be skeert ag'in ter do so."

A short argument prevailed upon his comrades to accompany him, and Trumps led the way toward the camp of the Pilgrim Sharp.

A short march soon discovered the camp, situated in a clump of half a dozen trees, and out upon the open prairie.

The hearse loomed up dimly in the gloom, the horses were visible, staked out near by, and a fire was burning, though not brightly.

Throwing themselves down upon the ground, the four men began to creep toward the lonely camp.

It was slow work, for, though they knew that the Pilgrim Sharp was back at the outfit, they still had a holy dread of any one who might remain as guard, if guard there was, over such a ghastly camp, and the horror of having seen a ghost the night before still dwelt most vividly in their minds.

After some minutes passed in crawling toward the camp, they halted, and at no great distance, while they took a deliberate survey of the camp.

The firelight caused the hearse to cast hideous, dancing shadows upon the prairie, and made the few trees seem like grim giants.

It also revealed the fact that the blankets beneath the hearse were unoccupied, and they drew a breath of relief at the discovery that there was evidently no guard to be encountered.

But what about the ghost?

This was the question in the mind of each one, and they kept their eyes upon the rear of the hearse with an attention that was almost painful.

"Pards, all are still, and there are no ghost."

"Thet were a trick o' ther Pilgrim, so we'll jist take this lay-out an' wait fer his comin' back."

"Come on!" and Trumps arose to his feet and walked boldly toward the little camp.

His comrades, gaining courage by the daring of their leader, quickly followed, and the mystery of the hearse seemed within their grasp, the secret about to be solved within another minute.

But suddenly, out from behind a tree stepped a dark object, and, passing in the full glare of the camp-fire, it came toward them.

Then from their lips broke cries of horror, and tottering they sunk upon their knees, while the object came slowly toward them.

And such an object!

It was a coffin, large, black, with its silver clasps along the sides, while in front the glass at the head was open, and a human face was visible there.

But, strangest of all, the coffin was upright, and moving slowly toward them.

In abject terror the four men groveled an instant; and then, springing to his feet with a yell that went far across the prairie, Trumps darted away like a deer, his example being instantly followed by his comrades, who seemed fairly to fly rather than run in their frenzy of fear.

For an instant the coffin halted, its occupant gazing after them apparently, and then it turned and slowly retraced its way back to the weird camp, disappearing in the shadows of the trees beyond the firelight.

CHAPTER VII.

THE THREAT.

DAYS passed on and still the train continued its march westward, and almost nightly the Pilgrim Sharp made his visits to the camp.

Some nights, it is true, he did not appear, and on such occasions many a bullwhacker gave a sigh of relief, for when he did come he was certain to leave a winner.

The train-men swore each time that he was a cheat, and that they would not play with him again; but each time he put in an appearance the temptation to try once more to win from him was beyond their resistance, and they would soon find themselves engaged in a game with him.

But though he almost invariably won, and it was believed that he cheated, watch as they

might they could never detect him in any underhand work, and his good hands seemed but a remarkable circumstance.

As for Trumps and his three comrades, they avoided the Pilgrim Sharp as though he were in reality none other than Satan.

That he was that alleged hooved and horned personage from Hades they now almost firmly believed, and since their last adventure, when they beheld a spirit walking about in its own coffin, they had been silent and sullen.

They dared not report what they had seen, so kept their peace, and at the same time watched the Yankee sharply.

One night the train camped upon the Sweetwater, and soon after the Pilgrim Sharp appeared, and as usual began to look about for some one to fleece of his gold.

"Say, Pilgrim pard, yer old huss must be gittin' heavy with dust, fer yer bes winned a all-fired heavy pile out o' this outfit," said Captain Sam, who had gone dead broke some time before, and didn't care how soon the others followed his example, for true it is that "misery loves company."

"Waal, I hain't won so very much, my friend, fer ther boys hain't had sich a almighty sight ter lose," was the calm reply of the Yankee.

"Waal, ef this outfit hits ther army with a dollar in ther pocket o' a man in it, I shell be astonished a bit, I sw'ar.

"But what does yer expect ter pitch yer tent in these parts, pard?"

"I am lookin' about daily fer a opening."

"Well, if you homestead, or stake a claim hereabout, yer'll git an opening durned quick, I kin tell yer, and it'll be a hole in the ground."

"I hain't skeerd o' any sich calamity, fer whc is goin' ter hurt me?"

"I'll tell yer who'll raise yer ha'r, an' ther are ther Injuns.

"Ef they don't, then ther Danites will."

"Ther Danites?"

"Yas, ther Mormon Danites."

"Who is them, stranger?"

"Fellows as hes a dozer wives, kills folks as hain't married at sight, and who 'nner United States Government hev sent General Albert Sydney Johnson out here ter kick out c' king-dom come."

"And they is fighting now?"

"Ther army is near about Fort Bridger, an' this train hes supplies that is goin' to ther sojers."

"I want ter know."

"Waal, I hev jist told yer; but who in thunder are these?"

The latter remark of the wagon boss was caused by seeing a number of horsemen riding into camp.

A moment after they were discovered to be dragoons, led by a young and dashing officer.

"Is this a Government supply-train?" he asked Captain Sam as he rode up and drew rein.

"It are, loot'nent," returned the wagon boss, his quick eye detecting the rank of the young officer.

"Have you any strangers in your camp?" was the next question.

"No, loot'nent."

"No one that is not connected with your outfit?"

"Nary one, sir"

"And on the march here from Leavenworth no one has joined you?"

"No, sir."

"Strange, my man, for I am in search of parties who were supposed to have come west with your train," and the young officer's face wore a puzzled look.

"Who is they, loot'nent?" asked Captain Sam.

"Well, my man, I will tell you that the adopted daughter of Colonel Lewellyn was kidnapped, or inveigled from her home in St. Louis, and by a man who is none other than an arch fiend, a Danite.

"A courier arrived at Fort Bridger several days ago with the tidings, and a person who followed the trail of the maiden and her kidnapper said that he was confident that the Danite was hurrying her west in some train bearing Government supplies, and I had orders to come and see if I could find the lady and capture the devilish Danite who had so cruelly deceived her."

"But ef she'd only let it be knowned, loot'nent, that she were bein' run off with, she'd find friends ter chip in fer her and end his days," said Captain Sam.

"True, if she knew that he was deceiving her; but from what news the colonel received from the courier it seems she had had no reason to doubt the man, and was evidently deceived by the story told her as to his intentions in taking her from her home and friends."

"Waal, i hopes yer may find 'em, sir."

"I sincerely hope so; but you are sure no one is with your train that does not belong to it rightfully?"

"I are sartin."

"You fergits me, stranger."

The speaker was none other than the Pilgrim Sharp, who had heard all that had passed, and now stepped out into the full glare of the camp.

The Pilgrim Sharp.

fire, confronting the young officer, as he stood by his horse.

The appearance of the Yankee brought an involuntary smile to the face of the lieutenant, who asked pleasantly:

"Well, my man, who are you?"

"I are a stranger in ther train, sir; but I guesses I don't be ther feller you is lookin' fer."

"Who is this man, wagon-master?" and the officer turned to Captain Sam, who answered:

"We calls him, ther Pilgrim Sharp, fer he are a Down-Easter, an' he's cleaned ther camp out o' dust, fer he do handle a keerd most wonderfu' ter win."

"Where are you from, sir?"

"Vermont, stranger, are my hunk when I is thar; but I hev come West ter settle an' grow up with ther country."

"Ah! and you are with this train?"

"I is, an' I isn't."

"You told me there was no stranger with your train, wagon-master."

"I forgotted him, and why I should, I doesn't know, loot'nent, fer he hev got all my dust; but ther fact is, he hasn't with ther train, and we is all glad of it, fer he do travel in most oncommon style, an' he's his camp back on the trail a mile or two."

"Explain, sir, who and what are you?"

"A Yankee," was the calm reply.

"And who are you traveling with?"

"Sue and ther kid."

"Who is Sue?"

"She is my wife, and ther kid are our leetle one."

"And where are they?"

"Back in my camp."

"And who else is with you?"

"Only thur horses and the hearse."

"The stage-coach, you mean?"

"I means ther hearse."

"Loot'nent, he talks squar' fer ther woman he calls Sue, an' ther leetle one is both dead, an' he are fetchin' them West in a reg'lar out and outer bone-wagon, intended ter settle heur an' plant 'em near whar he stakes his claim."

"He wanted to travel in comp'ny with ther outfit, but we c'u'dn't stand that, so he keeps in ther rear, an' at night comes inter camp fer a leetle game o' keerds."

"The poor man is mad," muttered the officer, feelingly; but aloud he said:

"Well, my man, I will come to your camp in the morning and see you."

"I'll be thar, lootenant, an' be glad ter see yer an' show yer the bodies o' poor Sue an' ther kid," was the response, and the Pilgrim Sharp turned away, leaving the wagon boss and officer talking together.

But once out of sight of the two, and he darted into the shadow of the timber, and stood watching them, as they stood together in the glare of the firelight.

Presently he half raised his arm, and extending it, ran his eye along the barrel of a revolver he held in his hand, while he said in a low, earnest tone:

"At last we meet again, my gallant Lieutenant Eugene Crichton, and you shall not thwart me now, after all that I have gone through, and dared, to win success.

"No, you shall die, and may the devil guide my bullet straight to your heart!"

CHAPTER VIII.

THE MURDER IN THE TIMBER.

The sudden change in the manner of the Pilgrim Sharp, from an apparently shrewd Yankee, to a man of intense hatred and revengeful feelings, was a startling one.

He had appeared to be one who loved gold, revered the memory of his alleged dead wife and child, to such an extent that he was taking their bodies with him to his new home, and that he was capable of taking care of himself he had clearly proven.

But that underneath all, there was a deep secret, a history, and feelings of intensest passion and revenge, no one had believed.

Had he been among men who were closer students of human nature, than were the members of the bull train of supplies, it might have been discerned that he was a man with a history.

But such discovery was not made, and Lieutenant Eugene Crichton, who had gazed upon him but a moment intently, supposed, from what he heard of his eccentricities, that he was a poor, harmless madman.

Standing as he did in the shadow, he held the young officer in full view, as he stood by his horse by the camp-fire, talking to Captain Sam.

Only twenty paces separated the victim from the intended assassin, and that the latter had full confidence in his deadly aim was very evident, for otherwise he would never have risked a shot there in that exposed place.

Ere his finger touched the trigger, he glanced around him, to see that the way was open for his flight, and, as he did so, his arm was knocked upward with a force that caused the revolver to explode, and a grip was upon his throat.

But the Pilgrim Sharp, though taken wholly by surprise, was a man to extricate himself from a danger by quick and deadly means, and, while the revolver of his foe covered him, for it

was pressed hard against his side, his left hand, in some mysterious manner found a knife, and the long, slender blade was forced into the heart of the man who had thus come upon him.

As the knife did its deadly work the Pilgrim Sharp turned himself quickly, thus avoiding the death-shot of his enemy, the bullet tearing his clothes, yet failing to wound him.

The two shots, hardly of many seconds apart, again alarmed the entire camp, and in an instant almost Captain Sam and Lieutenant Crichton had sprung to the spot.

There they discovered in the shadow a form lying upon the ground, and the Pilgrim Sharp standing upright, one foot resting upon the body of his enemy, and in his right hand a revolver, in his left his knife.

"Ho, Pilgrim, what in thunderation is yer up ter?" cried Captain Sam, excitedly.

"I was coming back to your camp, cap'n, when this gentleman sprung upon me, tried ter shoot me, and didn't do it," was the cool reply.

"Hal! you have killed him," cried Lieutenant Crichton.

"Like as not," was the calm reply.

"Yer knife hev cut clean through his heart," said Captain Sam, bending over the body.

"I want ter know," was the imperturbable answer.

Drawing the face further around until the light fell upon it, Captain Sam cried out:

"It are Trumps."

"Yes, but he didn't hold trumps in this game."

The calm reply of the Yankee caused Lieutenant Crichton to regard him more attentively, and after a moment the young officer said:

"Well, my man, as my being in camp places the train under my command, I must hold you for an investigation of this man's death."

"He tried ter kill me, and I kilt him."

"That may be, but it is my duty to hold you until a thorough inquiry is made."

"Here, sergeant, this man is your prisoner until to-morrow morning," and the officer turned to a sergeant, who with several dragoons had come up with the train-men.

"But what will my poor Sue and ther little one do 'ithout me?" cried the Yankee.

"If they are dead, as you say, they will not need you, and in the morning I will see that they are properly buried."

"Lead him away, sergeant, and see that he does not escape, for that man is not the fool he pretends to be."

"I'll guard him myself, sir," replied the sergeant, and stepping up to the Pilgrim Sharp, he led him away to the place where the dragoons were bivouacked, just beyond the train camp, while Captain Sam, inviting the officer to supper with him, told him of the trouble that had occurred between Trumps and the Yankee gambler, and gave it as his opinion that the young hunter had in reality attacked the eccentric stranger.

"It may be so, but somehow I believe that man is playing a part, and I shall know all about him to-morrow," was the reply of Lieutenant Crichton.

CHAPTER IX.

THE ESCAPE.

The Dragoon Sergeant led the Pilgrim Sharp to the tree, which he had selected as his own quarters for the night, and where a fire was just beginning to blaze up cheerily.

"I will have to bind you, my man," he said, gazing upon the prisoner in surprise at his attire and general appearance.

"I guess yer'd better, for I'd walk off if yer didn't," was the response.

"How came you to kill the man?"

"Oh! he tried to kill me, and so I got ahead of him," indifferently responded the Yankee.

"I hope you can prove it, for you will fare badly if you cannot."

The Pilgrim Sharp made no reply, and willingly held forth his hands to be bound.

Then his feet were securely tied together, and the rope made fast to the tree, after which a blanket was thrown down upon the ground for the prisoner to sleep upon.

Instantly the Pilgrim Sharp threw himself upon it, and declining the supper offered him, soon sunk into a peaceful sleep, or at least appeared to do so.

One by one the soldiers sought their blankets, the camp-fires, in the dragoon bivouac and the train encampment, burned low, and by ten o'clock not a sound broke the silence of the night, other than the occasional howl of a wolf, or hoot of an owl.

The sergeant, true to his duty, sat by the camp-fire, on guard over his prisoner, while he was reading by its light a well worn Bible.

His men were snoring soundly about him, and behind him lay the bound prisoner.

Suddenly the head of the Pilgrim Sharp was raised quietly, and his eyes were turned upon the sergeant as he sat within a few feet of him.

Then the blanket was raised, and an arm was thrust out to seize a belt lying near, and which held a revolver and the blood-stained knife

which had sunk deep into the heart of the hunter.

The belt was then clasped about the waist of the Yankee, while the knife was used to free his feet of their bonds.

So softly did the Pilgrim Sharp work that not the slightest sound had reached the ears of the sergeant, while his movements, concealed by the blanket, seemed to be merely those of a man in restless slumber.

Once free and with his arms, the Pilgrim Sharp took a survey of the scene.

The fire was burning low, and upon the other side lay in rows the score of troopers, and but a dozen feet away.

The sergeant was still absorbed in his Bible, and knew not that behind him was a foe who meant him harm.

Softly the Sharp arose from his blanket, and, with noiseless movement drew nearer to his unsuspecting guard.

He knew well the danger he ran, for a sound would awaken the soldiers, and perhaps even then some one of them might be awake and watching his movements.

Then too, the sergeant sat in the light, and a sentinel some distance off, on guard from the train might have his eyes turned in that direction.

But the Pilgrim Sharp seemed to feel that he must take all risks, and stealthily he crept to the back of his victim.

Then there came two quick motions together, for one hand seized the throat of the doomed soldier while the other drove the already blood-stained knife into the back, and straight for the heart to kill.

So iron-like was the grip upon the throat, and so well-aimed was the thrust of the knife, that not a sound came from the lips of the poor soldier, who was dead ere the murderer let go his hold upon him.

Then the body was raised, and with an ease that showed the wonderful strength of the assassin, and quickly laid upon the blanket by the tree and covered over carefully.

Not the eighth of a minute was spent in his deadly work and the hiding of his crime for awhile; and then, like a shadow, the Pilgrim Sharp glided away amid the trees.

He had reached the outskirts of the timber, when suddenly he was confronted by the train-guard with:

"Waal, who is yer, pard?"

The Pilgrim Sharp was in the shadow of the trees, the guard in the starlight, and the former recognized him in an instant as a herder who answered to the name of Gil, and the particular pard of Trumps.

"Say, Gil, step here, for I has suthin' ter show yer."

"I are hunk," he whispered. "Tain't a ghost, I hope, pard, fer I are oncommon narvous ter-night, since that Yankee devil kilt poor Trumps," answered the herder, as he stepped to the side of his supposed friend.

It was the last act of his life, as, for the third time that night, the knife of the Pilgrim Sharp was sheathed in a human heart.

But in his death-agony the herder managed to free his throat from the steely clasp upon it, and gave vent to one long, loud shriek of despair and anguish.

Hurling him to the ground, the Pilgrim Sharp bounded away with the speed of a deer, while instantly the camp of the supply-train and the bivouac of the soldiers was in a general alarm.

Men sprung to their feet, and grasping their arms, stood ready to meet a foe.

Armfuls of wood were thrown upon the dying fires, causing them to burn up quickly and make all about the encampment as bright as day.

But no one could tell from whence had come the wild cry, or what was the cause of alarm.

Lieutenant Crichton, who had slept up at the camp of the wagon-master, at once said:

"Send a patrol around to visit your guards, and I will do the same, wagon master. Then come and report to me."

Hastening off to his camp, while Captain Sam and Leather-Hoof, the guide, made the circuit together, the young officer found his men under arms, and everywhere searching for the sergeant.

"When did you see him last, corporal?" he asked.

"He was sitting by the fire, sir, reading his Bible, when I went to sleep," answered the corporal.

"And have none of you men seen the sergeant since?"

"No, sir," was the reply of all.

"Who is that lying there?"

"The prisoner, sir."

"He has not been disturbed by the cry," said the corporal.

Stepping to the side of the muffled form Lieutenant Crichton threw aside the blanket, and a cry of horror broke from his lips.

"Great God! It is Sergeant Rowe!"

"And dead, sir!" cried the corporal.

"Yes, stabbed in the back, and by that accursed Yankee."

"Men, you must have slept like the dead, to allow this murder to be committed within a few feet of you," sternly said the officer.

"It must have been the sergeant's cry that awoke us, sir."

"No, the devil's work here was done silently, and he covered up his tracks by placing the sergeant upon his blanket."

"Come, men, we will go to the camp of the murderer, for thither he will first go— Hal! what have you there, wagon-master?" and Lieutenant Crichton turned toward Captain Sam, who approached with Leather Hoof, the two bearing a dead form between them.

"It are another stiff, sir, and its Monk ther herder o' ther outfit!"

"Yes, and he too has a knife thrust in his heart, but in the left side, while my poor sergeant got it in the back."

"See, he still clutches the Bible he was reading when the accursed assassin struck him."

"But come, I have no time to lose, for I pursue the prisoner at once, and I wish a guide to his camp."

"What prisoner, sir?" asked Captain Sam, amazed.

"The one you called the Pilgrim Sharp, and deemed so harmless if left alone."

"Yer don't mean that he has did this red work, loot'nent?"

"I do."

"Who'd a' thought it?

"Waal, waal, I'll go with yer myself, and you come too, Leather Hoof."

"We'll git our horses, loot'nent, and be with yer," and hastening back to their camp the two men were soon mounted, and rode away on the back trail, followed by Lieutenant Crichton and a dozen of his cavalrymen, one and all anxious to capture the Pilgrim Sharp, and avenge those whom he had slain.

CHAPTER X.

A VICTIM.

I WILL now return to the night upon which Trumps and his three companions in sin, made their second attempt to solve the secret of the Pilgrim Sharp, and at the same time enrich themselves from the booty which they supposed he was carrying in the hearse.

Upon reaching his lonely camp that night, the Pilgrim Sharp had noticed that the springs of the dismal hearse needed bracing, and consequently he had at once removed the load that it carried.

First, he drew out a coffin of vast size, and the foot end of which was open, while the upper part of the lid was also off.

That there was a human form in the ghastly box there was no doubt, for a face was visible in the upper part, and feet were revealed through the open end.

Then, too, the coffin seemed very heavy as the Pilgrim Sharp lifted it to the ground, and placed it back in the shadow of the trees, standing on end.

Next came out of the hearse a side-saddle, then a roll of blankets, and several boxes, evidently containing provisions, after which a couple of carpet sacks.

Having mended his springs, the Pilgrim Sharp seemed too anxious to reach the camp of the supply train and indulge in his favorite sport of gambling, to replace the things in the hearse that night, so he departed, leaving the covered vehicle empty for the time.

He had been gone but a short while, when a low moan came from the grim box leaning against a tree beyond the fire-light in the shadow.

Then the coffin seemed to quiver, and a voice cried out:

"Oh God! where am I?"

A silence of an instant followed, and then in tones of anguish, and in a woman's voice, were the piteous words:

"This is a coffin that I am in, and I have been buried alive!"

Again a silence, and once more the anguish-wrung tones were heard:

"No, no, I am not buried alive, though this is certainly a coffin that I am in."

"I will burst off the lid and free myself from its loathsome embrace, for thank God, I yet am alive!"

She seemed to struggle hard then to break forth from her hideous prison, for the coffin shook violently.

But the effort was useless, though the struggle seemed to show her that her feet were free.

Pressing them hard upon the ground, she made an effort, and stood upright, though the black box swayed to and fro, as though its occupant tottered with weakness.

"Strange, that my feet are free," groaned the woman, and then came once more the pitiful cry:

"Oh God, where am I?"

For a moment she stood thus, and then, dazed in mind, suffering in body, she tottered toward the camp-fire.

It was just at this moment that Trumps and his pards came in sight, and were horrified at the sight of the walking coffin.

She saw the men, and though succor seemed at hand, her tongue could utter no cry.

She staggered forward to meet them, her brain dizzy, her heart throbbing violently, and then, as the four men sprung to their feet and bounded away, she fell forward in a swoon.

It was not long after that the Pilgrim Sharp came into his camp at a swinging walk, and his keen eyes fell upon the dark object lying upon the ground.

In an instant he sprung toward it, turned it quickly over, but no words came from his lips.

Thrusting his hand into his pocket he drew forth a key, and at once the lid was unlocked, the form removed and carried to the fire.

As he placed the limp form down upon the roll of blankets, the eyes of the poor woman slowly opened and fell upon the face bending over her.

"Who are you?

"Where am I?"

The questions were asked in a faint voice, and the eyes seemed striving to read his very soul.

As she lay there, half upheld by him, the fire-light fell full upon her, revealing a face that, though white as marble, and haggard, was yet of wondrous beauty.

Every feature was cast in a perfect mold, and the form, from the top of her haughty head, to her small, shapely feet, was one of exquisite outline and grace.

About her form was a shroud, and her wealth of rich brown hair, hung down her head in abandon.

"You are safe, for I am your friend," announced the man in a low tone.

"Let me remember! help me to recall all that has happened, for it seems I have been believed to be dead, and was in my coffin."

"My poor girl you were supposed to be dead, and I am glad to see that you are yourself again."

"Your voice I know; but who are you?"

"Your friend."

"That does not answer me."

"What more would you know?"

"I remember that I left home, to go to the Far West, and join my uncle and guardians at the fort, where he was stationed."

"Yes, and do you remember whom you left home with?" asked the Pilgrim Sharp.

"Yes, a man I did not like, though he was my uncle's half-brother."

"He did not seem to me to be a true man, and I had heard many stories of his wild life; but I trusted him, when my uncle wrote to me to come to him under the care of Rufus Yale."

"And you remember no more?"

"Oh, yes, we reached a small town in Missouri, and there I was taken ill, and that is the last I remember."

"Where are we now?"

"On the Overland Trail to Salt Lake."

"Ah! and I have been brought here in a coffin?" and the girl shuddered.

"Yes, Miss Leroy."

"You know my name then?"

"Yes, I know you to be Miss Lou Leroy, the niece and ward of Colonel Lloyd Lewellyn," was the answer.

"And who are you?" and the maiden raised herself to a sitting position, while she added:

"How very weak I am."

"Yes, you have lain in a trance for days."

Again the maiden shuddered and asked:

"But who are you?"

"I am Rufus Yale."

Lou Leroy started, and gazed earnestly into the face that looked into her own.

Then she said:

"Yes, now that you tell me who you are, I recognize you."

"But why have you shaved off your beard, Mr. Yale, and assumed this strange disguise?"

"I will tell you, Miss Leroy."

"When you were taken so suddenly ill, I, with others, believed that you died."

"I did not wish to bury you in that lonely place, so I conceived the idea of carrying your body on to your uncle."

"You were prepared for the grave, by the kind nurse I had secured for you, and procuring a coffin and hearse, I started westward with you."

"Something seemed to tell me that you were not dead, and so I broke out the foot of the coffin, and the upper part of the lid, to give you a current of air, and, thank God, I have saved your life thereby."

Again the lovely form shuddered, while the lips quivered as she asked:

"But why this disguise you wear?"

"To enable me to come West unquestioned."

"I pretended to have been an undertaker in my native town, and emigrating West, told the curiously inclined that I was bringing the body of my dead wife and child to my new home, for they were all I had to love."

"I was looked upon as an odd, half-crazed character and was left unmolested, and am now en route to the fort where you will meet your uncle, and the young officer to whom I believe you are engaged."

A flush crossed the marble-like face, but only for an instant, and then the maiden asked:

"But what was the nature of my illness, for I remember nothing after being seized with

a faintness after partaking of supper at the tavern?"

"I know only that you seemed to die, and that the doctor I called in said that it was heart trouble."

"But now you are yourself again, and the trip will build you up, though by day, to carry out my disguise and story in case we meet with trains, I shall have to ask you to ride in the dismal vehicle in which I have brought you here."

"No, no; it would drive me mad," she cried.

"Wait until the morrow and see, for I believe it is our only means of safety, as this trail is infested with road-agents; but they would never dare to halt us as we appear on the road."

"Now, you are weak, and I must give you some food and a swallow of wine to strengthen you, and, in your joy at your restoration to life, forget that you were in a trance and you will soon be yourself again, Miss Leroy."

She shook her head sadly, but made no reply to him, for it was evident that the horror of her situation had sunk deep into her soul, as burying her face in her hands she moaned:

"Oh, God! through what have I not passed?"

CHAPTER XI.

A WOMAN AT BAY.

ALONG the trail of the Overland, toward the far frontier, the hearse followed in the rear of the supply train, the poor girl forcing herself to act the part which her strange companion bade her play, as the only means of safety for them.

To her he was all respect, yet he was firm in his resolve that no act of hers should endanger them.

He had told her that a train was on ahead, yet so pictured those with it that he dared not let her presence be known to them and that he must keep up the holy horror he had inspired by his hearse and strange story.

He had made her as comfortable as possible, in spite of her dismal surroundings, and she silently obeyed his requests, for something told her that they were commands under the guise of politeness.

Upon the night when the three tragedies occurred in the encampment of the supply train, one so quickly following upon the heels of the other, Lou Leroy was alone in the dismal camp, two miles back on the trail from where the teams had halted for the night.

She was not lonesome, for she had gotten accustomed, to being alone, and really preferred that the Pilgrim Sharp should be absent.

She paced up and down before the flickering camp-fire, cheerless, yet not wishing to give up hope, and trying to wonder why Rufus Yale, as she knew her captor, kept up all this mystery.

Her sudden illness, and the horrible trance that followed, she could not comprehend.

But he had come to her with letters from her uncle and guardian, and also brought to her a tender missive from one whom she had learned to love with all her heart.

These letters had told her that Rufus Yale would bring her to Fort Bridger, where Colonel Lewellyn and her lover were stationed with the army, then preparing to move against Salt Lake City.

She had anticipated a long, hard trip of it over the overland trails, fraught with dangers, yet so far it had proven so full of horrors that her heart sunk within her at the thought.

A short while more and the hideous nightmare, as it seemed to her, must end; but she felt a sinking of the soul when she tried to hope for the best.

Suddenly she started, stopped in her walk, and listened.

She heard the rapid approach of feet.

There were arms near, and she knew well their use, while the Pilgrim Sharp had told her to defend herself if any one approached the camp in his absence.

Seizing a rifle, she stepped back in the shadow of a large tree, and stood ready.

But the next instant the form of the Pilgrim Sharp dashed into view.

He was panting from his long and rapid run, and called out quickly:

"Miss Leroy!"

"Where are you?"

"I am here, sir," and she stepped into view.

"Quick! for we must fly from here," he cried.

"Oh, Heaven, have mercy! What new danger threatens me now?" she said, despairingly.

"A great one, and one which admits of no delay."

"But tell me the nature of the threatened dangers?"

He paused, his face slightly changed its expression, and she saw it.

"Tell me!" she said, sternly.

"There are Indians swarming upon us," he said, with hesitation.

She seemed to read it in his face and words that he was not telling her the truth, and she answered:

"Are you sure that Indians are what we now have to dread?"

"Of course, for I have been fired upon and chased by them."

"Quick, get your things together, which you

can carry on horseback, while I saddle the animals, for we must leave the hearse behind us."

"Thank God for that blessing, at last," she murmured.

"You must hasten, Miss Leroy, for the need is most pressing," he urged.

"I have little preparation to make, for my satchel is here, and I have but to slip on my riding-skirt," she said sadly.

He sprung away from her, seized the bridles and saddles, and five minutes after led the horses up near the fire, prepared for the journey.

The carpet-bags were then fastened to the saddles, the rest of the traps thrown upon the fire, and seizing hold of the somber hearse, the Pilgrim Sharp said grimly:

"Now it shall perish too."

"What do you mean?" she asked.

"I shall burn it."

"Stand aside, please!"

She stepped to one side, and he wheeled the hearse back over the fire, and the flames at once leaped up about it, sending forth a crackling sound like a battle with revolvers.

"Now when the soldiers come, they shall not find this hearse as a trophy of their victory," he said grimly.

"The soldiers did you say, Mr. Yale?" she cried.

He saw that he had spoken without thought, and she detected in his face that she was being deceived, and quickly said:

"You said Indians were what we had to fear, when you first came, and now say that soldiers are coming."

"Oh, sir! tell me what all this means?"

"Bah! it was a mere slip of the tongue."

"I meant Indians, Miss Leroy, and, if you delay in mounting, you will find how cruel these red skins can be, for we cannot hope to cope with them."

"Come, I will aid you to your saddle!"

He stepped toward her as he spoke, when she waved him back, and suddenly seized the rifle, standing at the tree near her, and covered his heart, while she cried in ringing tones:

"Back, sir! or, I will send a bullet through your heart!"

CHAPTER XII.

THE GRAVE IN THE TIMBER.

WHEN Lieutenant Eugene Crichton dashed out of the camp of the supply train, there was a feeling in his heart, that he had struck the right trail to solve the mystery of Louise Leroy's disappearance from home.

If the Pilgrim Sharp had not some most potent reason for making his escape, why had he taken such desperate chances to do so?

Then, although he had been almost nightly with the train, his foe, Trumps, had not taken any opportunity before to kill him, and only, according to the report of the Pilgrim Sharp, had done so upon that evening.

"There is some mystery about the man, and I shall solve it," muttered the young officer, as he rode along.

An officer, coming West with his wife, had been commissioned by Colonel Lewellyn to bring his niece with him, and for that purpose had sought her home near St. Louis, to find that she had departed under strange circumstances the day before.

He knew, upon hearing the facts, that there must be something wrong, for, as the bearer of dispatches direct from Fort Bridger, and the last one to leave there, he felt assured that no other instructions had been given by Colonel Lewellyn, and what was worse, when he learned who it was that had acted as the escort of Louise Leroy, he was aware that she was in the power of a most dangerous man, though he was the step-brother of the colonel.

Instantly he dispatched a courier, with full reports, to Fort Bridger, while he followed on more slowly with his wife, and these dispatches were the ones that had so alarmed Colonel Lewellyn, and sent Lieutenant Crichton on the search for the kidnapped maiden.

Though the officer did not expect to find Louise Leroy with the strange man calling himself the Pilgrim Sharp, he yet hoped to unearth a villain, and did not doubt but that there was some deep mystery behind the actions of the eccentric genius who traveled the Overland Trail on the box of a hearse.

"He may be some Mormon officer with important dispatches, or gold, for Brigham Young," he said to Captain Sam.

"It do look queer ther way he hev acted, loot'nent."

"Yer see he are a iron man fer strength, an' he are dead sure with ther revolver every shot, while, as fer gamblin' he kin jist tarn ter trumps every time, same as a parson who is peachin' gospil, kin tarn ter a varse o' scriptur' he wishes ter shout out at ther bretheren."

"He are queer, an' no mistake."

"Well, wagon-master, we will soon solve the mystery, and I wish to take him alive for future reference."

"Do you think his camp can be far away now?"

"No, sir, fer I reckon we hez come about a mile an' a half— See thar!"

"It is the light of a camp-fire," answered the officer, looking in the direction the wagon boss indicated, and where the glimmer of a light was visible over against a steep hillside some few hundred yards distant.

"It are fer a fact, an' tha'll find ther Pilgrim Sharp, ef he hain't lit out."

"He cannot travel fast with a lumbering old hearse, Sam."

"Thet are so, an' he do love it too much ter leave it."

"Waal, we'll soon know."

Approaching the camp at a gallop, for the blazing fire now came into full view, the troopers soon drew rein in a semicircle, and gazed in amazement upon the scene which met their view.

The camp-fire was there, but the material that fed it was nearly consumed, yet sufficient remained to show those who beheld it that the hearse had gone up in flames.

Then, too, here and there were the charred remains of a box, a buffalo-robe and other things which had evidently been among the contents of the hearse.

Yet nowhere was the Pilgrim Sharp visible, nor any other human being.

The horses, too, which had drawn the dismal vehicle, had disappeared, and it was evident to all that the camp was deserted.

But Leather Hoo' and the soldiers separated to make a thorough search, and soon the voice of the guide was heard calling out:

"I hev made a diskivery loot'nent."

Having already dismounted, Lieutenant Crichton walked rapidly down the hillside where the guide stood, and soon all were gathered about him.

It was a grave, freshly made, that he had found.

"Who can be buried there, said the lieutenant, wonderingly.

"I guesses arter his red picnic up at ther camp, he concluded that ther best okipation be c'n'd be in were levantin' out o' this, an' so he roasted his old huss, buried his dead Sue an' ther kid, an' he's lit out on top o' one o' his animiles, leadin' t'other one, packed with what plunder he c'u'd carry along handy," suggested Captain Sam.

"I guess you are right, Sam; but I shall see what this grave contains," responded the lieutenant.

"It are bad luck o' ther awfulest kind, loot'nent, ter dig open a grave from cur'osity," said the guide.

"I'll take the chances, guide, on that."

"Here, men, get to work and throw the earth out of this grave," was the response.

The troopers promptly obeyed and had dug but a short distance when the point of a saber struck a hard substance.

"It hat a boller sound like a coffin," said Captain Sam.

Eugene Crichton made no reply, but attentively watched his men, and soon the top of a coffin was exposed.

A bowie-knife served as a screw-driver, and the upper part of the lid was removed; a torch from the fire was brought and all gazed down upon the white, dead face of a woman, one hand laid upon her breast.

The face seemed strangely life like, and by her side, sheltered upon her left arm, nestled a babe.

In silence, and with uncovered heads, all stood gazing down upon the sad sight, while Captain Sam said softly:

"The Pilgrim Sharp did tell ther truth, fer there be sartinly his poor Sue an' her babe, and he hev deserted 'em here, arter bringin' 'em so far."

"This but adds to the mystery, Sam, for I felt assured that the coffin held no human form."

"Corporal, replace the cover and fill up the grave, for this throws me wholly off of the scent."

"Then go to the train camp and bring my other men, and at daybreak we will strike the trail of the Pilgrim Sharp," said Lieutenant Crichton, and it was evident that he was bewildered by the discovery of the contents of the grave.

CHAPTER XIII.

THE JEW AND THE COURIER.

SINCE the night upon which Louise Leroy had returned to consciousness, after her long trance, the tactics of the Pilgrim Sharp had undergone a change.

Any one following upon the trail of the hearse, would have observed that at each camp a grave had been dug, and then filled in before departure.

In fact, the first thing that the Pilgrim Sharp did, after unhitching and staking out his horses, was to go some few rods off from the camp, and set to work digging a grave.

And this he did at every camping-place, as was soon discovered by the persons who were following upon the trail.

One of these persons was an individual of striking appearance, for he was a Jew, with a face so strongly marked with the Hebrew stamp as to be almost ludicrous in expression.

He had twinkling eyes, full of shrewdness, and a general look that indicated money making to be his paramount object in life, while he looked strangely timid for one who was willing to risk his life and wares, for he was a peddler, in that wild land.

He was dressed in a pair of checked pants top boots, and a buckskin coat, while his head was covered with a coon skin cap that added to his peculiar make-up and ludicrous appearance.

About his waist was a belt with a bowie-knife and three Colt's revolvers, while at his back was slung a rifle known as a Mississippi yager, a very serviceable weapon, and much in use on the border twenty-five years ago.

He was mounted upon a sorry looking animal, and his saddle was weighted down with leather and buckskin bags filled with his wares, while behind him followed a large mule bearing a pack, the size of which would have brought the immortalized Bergh down upon the Jew with the charge of cruelty to animals.

But the mule did not seem to mind his load, for he cropped the grass along the trail as he followed upon the heels of his master's steed, and seemed to enjoy the freedom that was given him.

By the side of the Jew rode a young man who was certainly not over eighteen.

His face was frank, fearless, resolute to caring, and he looked just what he was—a border boy capable of taking care of himself under any and all circumstances.

He was well-formed, wiry, had an eagle eye, and seemed ever on the scent for danger, a habit acquired by his life of constant peril.

He was clad in buckskin, wore a black sombrero and cavalry boots, and behind his saddle was rolled up an army overcoat and blanket.

He was mounted upon a roan mare that seemed full of go, with great staying powers, and his arms were a Mississippi yager and belt containing revolvers and a bowie.

This seemingly ill-matched pair had met on the trail, the young man being a bearer of dispatches from Leavenworth to Fort Bridger, and having overtaken the Jew as he was plodding along the Overland, following after the supply train.

To enjoy company the Jew had quickened his pace, and, finding that he had an amusing companion, the youth had been willing that they should travel together, for he knew that his good roan would carry him through on time.

As the supply train was of course traveling slow, the two on some day would pass two of its camping-places, and once or twice had jumped by three of them.

Of course the peculiarity of a small camp, always to be found a mile or so in the rear of the larger one, did not escape the quick vision of the young plainsman, and it set him to thinking.

Then the discovery of a grave at each camping-place, where the trail showed that the hearse had encamped, caused him to feel that something must be wrong.

"You ish named Dave, I perlieves!" said the Jew, one evening as the two went into camp, where several evenings before the Pilgrim Sharp had made his halt for the night.

"Yes, my name is Dave—Dave Harrington, as I have told you every day for a week or more, my Hebrew friend," answered the young dispatch-bearer, with a smile.

"Dot ish so, ant my names ish Buckskin Moses," replied the Jew.

"Your name was Moses Something—I couldn't get onto-with-my-tongue, so I called you Buckskin Moses, and it fits you; and if you go to Bridger with me, I'll get the army chaplain to baptize you by that cognomen."

"No, I don't pe baptizet, my frint; but I takes t'e name."

"Well, Buckskin Moses, what nice remark were you about to give utterance to when you asked for the hundredth time my name?"

"I was going to say, mine frint Dave, dat if t'ey keeps on buryin' peoples out o' thet train on ahead, thet no live folks will git to Fort Preetches."

"Fort Bridger, not Breeches, Buckskin Mose."

"But you are right; only this burying business does not seem to be from the train."

"Ish dat so?"

"Yes, for no graves are to be found at the supply-trains' encampment, but all are at the little camp where the ambulance, or whatever it is, encamps every night."

"Now see, there is a grave, and my word for it, more will be found at the halting-place of the train, when we pass it to-morrow."

"It ish very strange, mine poy frint."

"Yes, it is so very strange, that I intend to sail into this grave."

"Holy Isaacs! you don't intend to purify yerself?"

"Oh, no, but I intend to see what lies under that earth."

"You look after the horses and make a fire, while I set to work throwing out the dirt, for I have a curiosity to view the remains."

"Vell, dot ish goot," and the Jew did as he was told, while, aided by the last glimmer of twilight Dave Harrington began to throw the earth out of the grave, using his knife and stirrup for the purpose.

CHAPTER XIV.

RUN TO EARTH.

BUCKSKIN MOSES having staked the horses out to feed, and kindled a fire where the light would fall upon the grave, went and stood where he could watch Dave Harrington in his work.

"Vell, ish you fint t'e pody?" he asked, as Dave stopped digging for an instant.

"Not yet."

"It might pe a beoples mit t'e small-pox," suggested the Jew.

"I'll risk it, Backskin Moses."

"You ish young yet, and you might catch up mit t'e measles."

"I'll take chances on all I catch, Moses; but I see I am down to hard-pan."

"You ish fint a hard-pans?"

"No, I am down to bed-rock."

"Bet-rocks?"

"Dit you expect to find a ped mit fetters in a grave, mine frint?"

"I mean I am at the bottom of the grave."

"Dat ish so. And you don't ish fint t'e coffin?"

"I wasn't looking for a coffin; but I was expecting to find a body."

"Vell, vell; it hash been Resurrection Day mit t'e podies."

"No, Moses, for there was no body here."

"Den why for t'e grave pe tug?"

"That is just what I want to know, Moses."

"If I vas know, I vas tell you pretty tam quick."

"I don't doubt it; but I will soon know what this does mean, for I'll open a grave or two more as we go along."

The two comrades then set to work preparing their frugal supper, and after a comfortable night's rest, went on their way once more, halting at the next camping-place of the Pilgrim Sharp.

Again did Dave Harrington find a grave there, and hastily he threw out the earth, to discover that it too was tenantless.

Hastening on to the next halting-ground of the hearse, a third grave was found and opened, and with like result, and the mystery deepened to an extent that caused the Jew and young plainsman to talk of nothing else but the strange occurrence as they rode along together.

The fourth night after Dave Harrington began his grave-opening, the two came upon the camp where the hearse had gone up in flames.

It was not yet dark, and the signs about showed the experienced eye of the young courier that something of importance had occurred there.

There were remnants of the hearse here and there, sufficient to show what the vehicle had been which had been before them on the trail, and after examining all the tracks about the camp, Dave said quietly:

"The thing went up in smoke here."

"T'e wagon?"

"The hearse."

"Holy Abraham! vas it a hearse?"

"Yes."

"Den t'e graves vas all right?"

"I don't know about that: but here are the rear doors of a hearse, and a part of the box-covering, or I don't know those gloomy carriages when I see one."

"These wheels are jet-black, and there is some of the burnt trimming."

"And t'ere ish t'e grave down t'ere."

"Yes, and soldiers have been here."

"Solters?"

"Yes, for there lies a saber and dragoon saddle-holster which some one has left, and the tracks all show iron-shod hoofs. There has been music here, Moses."

"Moosik been here, mine frint? Vell, I loves moosik."

"Not the kind they had here, for I think there was a fight."

"Mine gootness!"

"Dit dey kilt some beoples?"

"We'll see what that grave reveals."

At once they set to work throwing out the earth, and soon their knives struck a coffin.

Instantly they stopped and looked at each other, while Dave Harrington said:

"At last!"

"You have fint somedings?"

"Yes."

"Vell, dat ish goot."

Again they set to work, and soon unearthed the coffin, which had been found by the soldiers.

"Deat beoples," said the Jew.

"It seems so, but I shall see. Come, let us dig around it and take it out."

Silently they went to work again, and soon were enabled to raise the coffin from its narrow bed though the weight was great.

Having carried it to a spot near the campfire, Dave Harrington made a screw-driver of his knife and at once began work to remove the lid, while he remarked:

"I'll see just who this is that has bad so many graves dug for he, she or it, as the case may be."

In the mean time Buckskin Moses had sprung down into the open grave, and a call of surprise

attracted to him the attention of the young courier who asked:

"What is it, Buckskin Moses?"

"Come down here, mine frint."

"Well?" and Dave Harrington sprung down into the loathsome hole by the side of the Jew.

"Dere ish more graves beneath dish."

"More graves beneath?"

"Dat ish so."

"What do you mean, Moses?"

"De grave goes farder down mit the ground."

"Ab! you mean that we have not struck bed-rock yet?" eagerly asked Dave.

"I don't know about t'e ped-rocks, but I do pe knows dat t'e knife goes down here mit t'e hilt."

"By Jove! but you are right, for your knife is buried to the hilt and the earth on the bottom is soft."

"Dig, Moses—dig, and we'll resurrect the whole lay-out."

Again they set to work, the coffin and its contents momentarily forgotten in their new discovery; and as they dug, they could see that the grave had been dug deeper and then filled in for some purpose or other.

What that purpose was they were determined to discover.

In silence they worked, and hard; and suddenly the knife-point of Dave Harrington gave back a ringing sound, as though it had struck some metallic substance.

Thrusting his hand down into the loosened earth he seized hold of something, and with a strong pull drew it to the surface.

It was a large buckskin bag and very heavy.

"Gold, by the beard of Brigham Young!"

The young courier fairly shouted the words, and eagerly the Jew clutched hold of the bag as he held it aloft.

"And, by the beard of Brigham Young, you shall die!"

The words, hoarse and threatening, fell startlingly upon the ears of the courier and the Jew, and above them, with revolvers covering their hearts, they beheld three men clad in deep black and wearing crimson masks.

"Danites!" broke from the lips of the young courier, as he recognized the terrible trio.

CHAPTER XV.

BUCKSKIN MOSES PLAYS A BOLD GAME.

THAT both Dave Harrington, the handsome young courier, and Buckskin Moses, the Jew peddler, were considerably taken aback at the wholly unexpected appearance of foes upon the scene, there was not the slightest doubt.

His experience upon the Far West border, though he was young in years, told the courier that he was surprised by men who were merciless.

He knew well the attire of the Danites, their black clothing and red masks, and that he was wholly in their power, he could not doubt.

In his work he had cast aside his belt of arms, as had Buckskin Moses, and they lay beyond their reach; but even had they been within easy grasp, a movement of the band would have been the signal for their death.

Just as they felt they had made some startling discovery, they were caught, and what the result would be they could but conjecture.

On their side along the trail the Jew had asserted his intention of behaving with astounding valor, should they get into danger, or have to face death; but now when confronted with real peril he seemed utterly overcome.

His teeth clicked together as though he had a nervous chill, and sinking upon his knees in the grave, as though the weight of his body was too much for his fright-weakened legs, he held up his hands in supplication, while he cried out:

"Fer t'e sake o' Abraham, shentilmens, don't kill me, for I ish put a poor mans dat don't harm noppodys."

"Shut up, Jew, and let us see what these fellows intend to do with us," sternly said Dave Harrington.

Then turning to the Danites he continued:

"Well, you've caught us in a hole, so what do you intend to do about it?"

"You are Dave Harrington, the military courier, called by the soldiers Daring Dave?" said one of the three men, who appeared to be the ringleader.

"Yes, so I am called, and I am not afraid of my name."

"You are one of the red-handed, crimson-hearted murderers of Jack De Lee's Danite band of cutthroats!" was the fearless reply.

"I am just what you call me, young man, and when I take you to my chief I think I'll get promotion," answered the Danite coolly.

"Oh! I ain't worth much, Danny," said Dave.

"Yes you are, for you bear important dispatches to Sydney Johnson, which our chief will take pleasure in reading."

"Besides, I have caught you just in the nick of time to save the treasure and important papers which this grave contains."

"Yes, the grave was panning out pretty well, I'll admit," said Dave.

"Boy, you don't know its value, for there are

many thousands of dollars in gold beneath your feet, and important papers for Brigham Young, which he would not have seen by your people for all the treasure.

"You came very near making a rich haul from the Mormons, but you slipped up," and the three Danites laughed lightly, while Buckskin Moses said beseechingly:

"I vill gives to you shentilmans mine share of t'e goit, ef you ish pe so goot ash to let me git avay from you."

"Ha! ha! ha! your share of what gold, Jew?"

"T'e goit mit t'e grave."

"You villainous old Hebrew, it is not your gold to give."

"I help find him mit mine young frint," whined the Jew.

"Yes, and you helped lose him, too, with your young friend."

"But come, get out of the grave, both of you, and you, Dave Harrington, I'll slip irons upon, for you are dangerous, while a lariat is enough for the Jew."

"Holy Moses! I am ruint, I am ruint in peeziness," moaned the Jew.

"Out of that grave, I say!" again sternly ordered the Danite leader, and Daring Dave, as I shall call him, for by that name he was better known to his companions on the border, sprung lightly out, while Buckskin Moses awkwardly scrambled to the top.

"Now, my gallant cruiser, hold forth your hands."

Without a word Daring Dave obeyed, for resistance he knew was useless, as the other two Danites covered him with their revolvers, they not seeming to think it necessary to more than watch the Jew.

Quickly the Danite leader clasped a pair of steel cuffs upon the wrists of Daring Dave, and bending down secured his ankles in the same way.

"Now tie up that Jew," ordered the leader.

One of the men quickly obeyed, binding the hands of Buckskin Moses behind him with a lariat.

Then four horses belonging to the Danites were led up to the grave, and upon one of them was a pack-saddle.

As though fearful of tarrying long in that neighborhood, the Danites set to work to get out of the grave what they knew to be there, and Daring Dave watched them attentively, while bag after bag of gold was handed up and placed securely in the pack-saddle.

As for Buckskin Moses he sat upon the ground, his head bent in deepest dejection, and moaning and mumbling in a way that disgusted Daring Dave and amused the Danites, for they laughed and joked at his distress and trembling terror.

"That ends the gold, twelve bags in all, as ther major said," remarked one of the men, handing up the last buckskin bag.

"Now the papers, Leo," said the leader.

"Ay, ay, sir," and diving down again into the grave, after awhile a small iron box was handed up.

"There is a tin box now, and that is all," said the leader.

"Out she comes," and a tin box, locked, as was the iron one, with a padlock, was handed up, and these were also placed in the pack-saddle.

"Now we must be off, and Jew, your goods and chattels will be welcome among the boys, I assure you, while, Daring Dave, we'll have a grand picnic when we hang you."

"Oh! you intend to hang me, do you?" said Dave, indifferently.

"Yes, I guess so, though the chief may find some other way of calling in your chips."

"Well, I won't squeal, for I've lived with my life in my hands, so do not complain," was the plucky response of the young courier.

"Oh, you've got nerve, I know, but I guess a Danite execution will make you shout for mercy."

"We'll see."

The Danite leader smiled, and then turned to one of his men whom he had addressed as Leo, and who was a tall, well formed fellow, armed to the teeth, but whose face was wholly shielded, as were the faces of his comrades, by the crimson mask he wore.

"Leo, you mount your horse and push on ahead with the pack-animal, while we tie this courier and Jew to their saddles, and follow on."

"Ay, ay," answered the Danite, and he threw himself into his saddle, seized the lariat of the pack-horse, and rode away in the darkness, while the leader sent his remaining man after the animals of Daring Dave and the Jew, remarking:

"I'll make a chain of these irons, Daring Dave, and fasten your feet together under your horse, for I've heard that you are a hard one to hold after you are caught."

"You have the power, so do as you please, Danite," was the cold reply.

The Danite then unfastened the clasp upon one of Daring Dave's ankles, and strung several of the irons together, taking them from a pocket in tis saddle.

"Ah! here comes Buck with your horse, so mount, and then I'll make you secure," he said,

The Pilgrim Sharp.

as the other Danite came up, leading the courier's roan mare, Buckskin Moses's gaunt horse, and the mule with its huge pack.

"Say, cap'n, ther coffin is yonder by the fire," said the Danite.

"Ha! I had forgotten about that."

"Well, we must bury it again, so let us get it as soon as we have tied these prisoners upon their horses."

"Come, Daring Dave, no nonsense, but mount!"

Feeling that resistance was utterly vain, Daring Dave placed his unmanacled foot in the stirrup, and, refusing aid from his foe, and ironed as he was, lightly mounted to his saddle.

"Well done, Daring Dave! You are as agile as a cat."

"Now I'll fasten these irons."

While one of the Danites fastened the roan mare to a tree, the other clasped the irons upon Daring Dave's other ankle, thus rendering him utterly powerless to escape by springing to the ground.

"Now Jew, we'll fix you," and the two started toward the Jew, who still rocked his body to and fro, the while moaning bitterly.

"One moments, shentimens!"

There was a startling sternness in the voice of Buckskin Moses, and, with the words he was upon his feet, while both hands were thrust forward.

And, seemingly from the very hands came two flashes in quick succession, and dead in their tracks sunk the two Danites, while Buckskin Moses coolly remarked, while he held up a small derringer in each hand:

"Dey takes my big goons, but fergot my leetle sons-of-goons, mine frient Dave."

CHAPTER XVI.

THE COURIER RETURNS.

FORT BRIDGER has been, for over a quarter of a century, noted in the history of the Far West, and at the time of which I write, during what is known as the "Mormon War," it was the theater of many stirring scenes.

In one of the winters passed there, when many soldiers and employees of wagon-trains were hemmed in the frontier post, hardships and sufferings untold were endured by the brave men who were battling against the cruel foes who had gained so strong a footing in the Salt Lake Valley, and, under their loved leader, prophet and general, had thrown down the gauntlet of defiance to the United States Government.

But it is not of that war that I am writing, but only of such part of it, as necessitates the bringing in of characters who figured there, and a few of whom yet live, though many of them have long since gone to answer the roll-call in the Great Beyond.

To the neighborhood of Fort Bridger, I would now have my reader accompany me, and, at a time a few days after the bold game played by Buckskin Moses to secure the escape of himself and Daring Dave from their Danite captors.

In a large tent, just after sunset, several officers were seated, one of them wearing the uniform of a colonel, and the others being of lesser rank.

They were discussing the probability of an early move against the Mormons, and the coming of supplies awaited, and anxiously hoped for, when into their midst stepped two persons.

"Daring Dave! as I live!" cried the colonel, and, as he spoke he grasped the hand of the young courier, while he continued:

"And you have news, I hope, Dave?"

"Yes, Colonel Lewellyn, I have dispatches, but as I was not told to ride hard, I do not think they are very important."

"But I have other news for you, sir."

"Indeed have you seen Lieutenant Crichton?" quickly asked the officer, who was a hand-some man of fifty, and every inch a soldier.

"No, sir; but I heard of him."

"And has he met with success?" eagerly asked the colonel, while a shadow fell upon his fine face.

"I will tell you, sir, what I heard of him; but let me present to you, Colonel Lewellyn, my friend and fellow traveler, Buckskin Moses, for I know him by no other name, and to him I owe my life."

"Indeed! I am glad to meet you, Mr. Moses."

"How you vas, generals?" and Buckskin Moses grasped the outstretched hand, while he continued:

"My name vas Mordecai—Meses Mordecai; but my young frient here calls me Buckskin Moses."

"I vas a peddler, generals, ant I has t'e pest goats mit t'e country, but I sells 'em to you sheep."

The colonel smiled, and asked:

"How was it, Dave, that Mr. Moses saved your life?"

"I will tell you, sir.

"We came on together from near Leavenworth, where I overtook Buckskin Moses, and we discovered that wherever there was a spot where Captain Sam's supply-train had encamped for the night, back from it a mile or two was another camp, but a small one.

"We also discovered that wherever this small camp was, there was a grave, and—"

"A grave?"

"Yes, colonel, and I determined to investigate, so dug into the grave at the next camp we came to."

"Well, what was the result?"

"There was nothing in the grave, sir, and so it happened of every one that we dug down to bed-rock, sir."

"This was remarkable."

"So it was, sir; but we came to a camp that had a grave which was not empty."

"Ah! and what found you in it?"

"We could see from the signs all about that there had been some trouble in that camp, so while Buckskin Mose staked out our horses and built a fire, I set to work on the grave."

"At last Buckskin Mose came to help me, and soon we struck it rich."

"Ha! what did you find, Dave?" asked the colonel, eagerly, while the other officers present also seemed deeply interested in the story of the young courier.

"We found a coffin, sir."

"A coffin?"

"Yes, Colonel Lewellyn, and one that was no slouch, for it had silver handles, and was gotten up in a style that was most becoming for a corpse."

"Well, we raised it out of the grave, and carried it to the fire, and while I was working at the screws with my bowie, Buckskin Mose made a discovery that carried me quickly back to the grave."

"And that discovery, Dave?"

"We found that the grave had been dug deeper and filled in, so we again set to work, and I had just unearthed a buckskin bag full of gold, when we found three Danites standing over us, and they had us covered."

"Ahl your story increases in interest, Harrington, I assure you."

"Well, sir, we had to throw up the sponge, for they had us dead, and Buckskin here seemed to be frightened half out of his wits."

"In fact, they did not seem to think him dangerous, for while they ironed me hand and foot, they only tied him up with a lariat."

"Then the Danites began to unearth other things from the grave, and they took out twelve bags of gold, and two boxes, one iron, the other tin, full of important papers, maps and dispatches for Brigham Young."

CHAPTER XVII.

DARING DAVE'S STORY.

THE announcement of Daring Dave, that the boxes contained important papers for Brigham Young was a great surprise to the colonel and his officers, and a most annoying piece of news, too.

"Then, as far as the grave was concerned, it was but a blind to hide the gold and the papers of the Mormon chief in?" said the colonel.

"No, sir, not exactly; but the Danites had evidently come there, knowing what was in it, and they caught us like rats in a trap."

"Having gotten the contents, and packed them on an animal, which they had brought with them, and which had a pack-saddle, they dispatched one of the number on ahead with the booty and papers, while the other two remained to look after us and the pack of Buckskin Mose.

"They said they intended to kill me, and made me remount my horse, and ironed my feet and bands securely."

"But Mose had been whining and moaning most dismally all the time, and when they started toward him the two Danites were taken by surprise, I assure you, for he had managed to free his small hands from the bonds, and having two derringers, he met the rascals with shots that dropped them both in their tracks, and we were free once more."

"It did not take Buckskin Mose long to unlock my irons, and then we went to investigate the contents of the coffin over by the fire."

"In removing the upper part of the lid we discovered what appeared to be a dead woman and a little child resting upon one arm."

"But Moses is a very curious man, colonel, and in looking more closely, he detected that the coffin contained dummies."

"Dummies, Harrington?" asked the colonel in surprise.

"Yes, sir, for they were wax heads and hands, and were made to represent a dead woman and child."

"This is most astounding news, Dave."

"It was an astounding discovery for us to make, sir, I assure you; but we brought the wax stiffness with us in Mose's pack, and you shall see them."

"Having made this discovery, we bundled the two Danites into the coffin, after Moses had taken their black suits and red masks—"

"Yesh, dey ish goot for odder mans to wear, generals," put in the Jew.

"And you took their clothing from them, Dave?"

"Buckskin Mose did, sir, and then we rode on, and about daylight overtook Captain Sam's supply train, and I told him of our discovery,

and he informed me that the camp had been made by a Yankee, calling himself the Pilgrim Sharp, and that he had followed him from Leavenworth, camping each night near him, as the train-men would not allow him to join the outfit with a hearse."

"A hearse?"

"Yes, sir, for hearse he had, as good a one, Captain Sam says, as ever trotted a stiff through a country town to the planting ground."

The Pilgrim Sharp, it seems, had been on his muscle in Leavenworth, the night before Sam's bull outfit pulled out for the trail, and he had licked Bruiser Dick then, shot him through the hand, and the next day came sailing to the front on his old hearse, in which he said were the bodies of his wife and child, which he was taking West to bury wherever he staked out a land claim for a home.

"Every night the Sharp would come to Sam's camp and clean the boys out at cards, and it seems he was there the night Lieutenant Crichton met the train.

"In some way he got into trouble with a train hunter by the name of Trumps, and killed him, and Lieutenant Crichton at once had him arrested, to stand trial."

"Crichton was right, and if he murdered the hunter, the Sharp, as you call him, shall hang for it," sternly said the colonel.

"Not he, sir, for he was taken to the troopers' camp, where Sergeant Rowe himself mounted guard over him."

"But in some mysterious way he freed himself, drove a knife into the sergeant's back—"

"Great God! had he killed that splendid fellow Rowe?" cried the general, springing to his feet.

"He did, sir, and so silently, that he made his escape, but not until he had also slain the herder of the train, who was on guard, and doubtless attempted to halt him."

"The fellow is a devil."

"He's a terror, sir; but he got away, although the cry of the herder alarmed the camp."

"Lieutenant Crichton took half of his men soon after and followed him to his camp, and there found that he had burned his hearse, mounted his horses and escaped."

"Too bad indeed."

"Yes, sir, and his dummies fooled the lieutenant, who had the grave opened."

"At daylight, colonel, the lieutenant and his men went off on the trail of the Pilgrim Sharp, who rode one of his horses, and doubtless used the other as a pack-animal, and my opinion is, that the fellow is a Danite, who was bringing gold and dispatches to Brigham Young, and sent the three men back for the treasure that was in the grave, when they took in Buckskin Moses and myself."

"Your surmise is doubtless right, Harrington; but what of Crichton and his men?"

"Of them I know nothing, sir, since he left on the trail of the Pilgrim Sharp."

"Then he could not have found my niece, Miss Leroy, though he may have some clew to her whereabouts," sadly said the colonel.

"Of that I cannot say, sir."

"You did not hear if the Danite, or Pilgrim Sharp, had any one with him?"

"Captain Sam says he did not, sir."

"Well, it is a pity you could not have captured the Danite who escaped with the gold and papers; but I trust that Crichton will do so."

"If any man will, sir, Lieutenant Crichton is the one to do it."

"Now, colonel, Moses and myself will look up something to eat, and seek rest, for we need both."

"But if you want me, sir, I'll be over at the sutler's cabin," and Daring Dave took his departure, followed by Buckskin Moses, of whom Colonel Lewellyn said, as the two departed:

"That Jew is not such a fool as he looks."

"Such is just the opinion which I arrived at, sir," answered Captain Fitz Hugh Lee, a dashing young officer who was present; and he added:

"In spite of the chronic look of half terror the Jew wears, he has nerve, or he never would have risked those shots with his derringers, and that he killed his men too, proves that he fired with deadly aim— Ha! there comes Crichton now!"

All in the tent sprung to their feet and dashed out, at the words of Captain Lee, just as several horsemen rode up to the spot and drew rein.

They were half a dozen dragoons, with Eugene Crichton at their head, and their horses showed that they had been pushed hard, for they were gant, panting, and covered with sweat and mud.

The riders, too, were pale and haggard, and several of the soldiers showed that they had been wounded, for one had an arm in a sling, another a handkerchief bound about his head instead of his hat, and the cheek of another was gashed and bleeding.

"In Heaven's name, Crichton, what has happened?" cried Colonel Lewellyn, excitedly.

Dismounting in a weary way, the young officer said hoarsely:

"I am sorry, Colonel Lewellyn, to have to

report ill-tidings; but these are all of the men I have left out of the score who left with me."

"Hail you have had a hot fight then with the Mormons?"

"With the Danite Band under Major De Lee, sir, and we barely escaped with our lives."

"You were rash, I fear, Crichton," said the colonel, reprovingly.

"The circumstances of the case warranted rashness, Colonel Lewellyn, for I followed on a trail that caused me to discover your niece, Miss Leroy, and—"

"Ha! what of her, Crichton?

"Speak! for the love of God!" and the officer seized the arm of the young lieutenant and gazed into his face with earnest entreaty.

"Alas, sir, she is a captive to De Lee, the Danite!"

CHAPTER XVIII.

THE DANITE'S THREAT.

I MUST now return to the thrilling moment, so long lost sight of, when Louise Leroy turned at bay against the man who had so strangely taken her from her home and had told her that she must fly on horseback with him from an enemy who was coming upon them.

Wholly at the mercy of the man, alone in a wilderness, she had remained obedient, believing and hoping for the best.

But when doubt of him entered her mind, and he added to this doubt by saying that soldiers were coming, where he had at first said Indians, then she determined to assert her womanhood, and had seized the rifle near at hand and covered his heart with it, while from her lips came the threat of death to him, if he advanced upon her.

The Pilgrim Sharp did not seem in the slightest degree disconcerted by her act, but simply asked:

"What would you do, Miss Leroy?"

"Defend myself against you, sir."

"I mean you no harm."

"Then why fly from soldiers, whom you accidentally let me know were coming?" she said scornfully.

"As I told you, I meant Indians, though I inadvertently said soldiers."

"I know what will be the result to both of us if we remain here, and that your fate will be worse than mine, you may well know."

"Oh! that I could still trust you," she said wearily.

"You can, and to prove it, I will say to you that I did not tell you the worst, for I wished to keep back what fate would really be yours."

He spoke earnestly, and she said, as she compressed her lips and nerved herself to hear all:

"Speak, sir, and tell me the worst!"

"I will do so, as every moment you delay us here renders our escape more doubtful."

"I told you that Indians were coming here, but now I tell you that they are Danites!"

She shrank back, and leaned against the tree for support, while the rifle dropped from her hand.

Well she knew, from all she had heard of the Mormon Danites, what she had to expect, if she fell into their merciless, worthless hands.

"Oh, save me!" she gasped, and at the entreaty he sprung to her side.

His appearance was eccentric to ridiculousness, but his voice was deep and earnest, his manner honest, and his words sincere, or they appeared the very soul of sincerity.

"I will save you, Louise Leroy, for I love you."

"Nay, I press no claim upon you, tell you no story of my love, only I wish you to feel that it is my earnest desire to save you, no matter if it is to become the wife of another as soon as you arrive at Fort Bridger."

"See, the better to serve you I assumed this disguise, and had I not done so, neither you or I would have been here now."

Danites haunt this Overland Trail, and in these troublous times they hesitate at no act of cruelty or deviltry, while you would be a prize for which Brigham Young himself would face death a hundred times.

"Now, I confess to you, that I might have no resistance from you, that I drugged you at the little inn where we stopped in Missouri, before entering Kansas—"

"Drugged me?" she gasped.

"Yes, for it was better so and it is better now for you to feel that you were drugged, than that you were in a trance."

"With you unconscious, believed to be dead, I laid my plans, and I have brought you in safety thus far."

"In the train ahead there are many Danites in disguise, and it is only by catering to their superstitious fears that I have kept them away from my camp."

"Now there has been a break among them, they are getting near their friends and home, and it is whispered that my hearse bears treasure, and not the dead bodies of my wife and child as I have represented."

"Twice have attempts been made to rob me, but the first time I frightened off the villains by playing ghost, and once you gave them a shock which effectually scared them off from coming again."

"You have seen that each night I have worked hard, upon reaching camp, to dig a grave, and place in it the coffin and pretended bodies.

"This has been to meet just such an emergency as has now arisen, for coming here, and finding the grave, and, as they believe, its dead, our foes will not pursue me, and escape will be in our power."

"Now you know all that I have to tell, and I ask you if you still doubt me, or will trust me?"

She seemed deeply moved by his quick, earnest words, and instantly said:

"I do trust you, and will go with you."

"Forgive me for doubting you."

He bent his head low before her, and then springing away led up the horses, and soon after the Pilgrim Sharp and the young and beautiful girl, so wholly in his power, rode away in the gloom of the night just as the party of Lieutenant Crichton came in sight of the fire, and charged rapidly down upon the deserted camp.

CHAPTER XIX.

THE FLIGHT.

If Louise Leroy noticed, as she rode along close upon the heels of the horse of the Pilgrim Sharp, that her guide and protector seemed to know the trails strangely well through that wild land, she made no remark about it.

She held her reins well in hand, for the trail was a rough one, and with her eyes fixed upon the quaint form in advance, she was lost in thought.

She remembered that when but a mere girl she had met Rufus Yale, and that he had confessed his love for her, a love she could not return, though somehow he had won her pity, for there was a shadow upon his life.

Then he had disappeared, and his step-brother, Colonel Lewellyn, had for a long time believed him dead, and had often said that it was better so.

Then he turned up again, apparently trusted by his step-brother, and had come for her, to be her escort to the Far West, and how strangely was he carrying out the duty he was sent upon she could not but observe.

Still she could do no more than trust him, and hope for the best, though seeds of doubt once sown in the heart grow like rank weeds and are hard to root out.

All through the night, until the first faint glimmer of dawn in the east, the Pilgrim Sharp pressed on his way, closely followed by the maiden.

Then he drew rein in a sheltered nook, and upon the banks of a little stream.

"Here we will rest, Miss Leroy, and well I know that you need it," he said.

Then he built a fire, got out the provisions, and, spreading some blankets for her to recline upon, said he would leave her to rest while he took a short reconnaissance to find out just where they were.

He had not been gone five minutes before the tired girl sunk into a deep sleep.

How long she slept she did not know, but she awoke with a start as the words fell upon her ears:

"Hail here is game worth the bagging!"

She uttered a cry of terror, for before her she saw three forms, clad in deep black, wearing crimson masks, and armed to the teeth.

But as she looked another form sprung from behind a boulder, a revolver in hand, and covered the three masked men.

"Not so fast, my gallant Danites, for that game is mine!" cried the Pilgrim Sharp, for he it was that had so opportunely appeared upon the scene, just as poor Louise Leroy gave up all hope.

The three men were caught, and, turning, beheld the strange individual who confronted them, and who had them covered.

"Who are you?" said one of the three, appearing to be the leader.

"Nauvoo!"

The answer caused all three to start, and then the leader said, with some respect in his tone:

"If you know Nauvoo, you must also know more."

"Give us the sign."

There were several quickly-executed movements of the hands of the Pilgrim Sharp, and instantly the three men placed their clasped hands upon their foreheads and bowed low twice, while Louise Leroy watched the scene with strange interest.

"What orders has the chief for his servants?" asked the leader of the somber-looking trio.

"Go!"

As the Pilgrim Sharp spoke he pointed down the valley, and again bowing twice, the three men departed in silence.

He watched their departure and then said:

"Well, that was a close call, Miss Leroy, and I thank High Heaven that I knew the secret signs given by the Danite leaders."

"They are Danites, then?" asked Louise Leroy in a hoarse whisper.

"Yes."

"Oh, how they frightened me, for I was asleep and dreaming of home and happiness."

"My poor child, you shall soon be in your

home, and with those who shall love and honor you."

Somehow his words caused her to shudder, instead of soothing her, and she asked, with a tinge of suspicion in her tone:

"How knew you the secret signs of the Danites, Mr. Yale?"

"I will tell you Miss Leroy."

"For some time I have dwelt on the border, and one night there came to my humble cabin home a man wounded and dying."

"I gave him shelter and cared for his wounds, and in his delirium he told me who and what he was."

"It appears that he was a Danite officer of high rank, and while raving with fever and suffering, he went over and over again the forms and signs of the Danites, and thus I learned them all, and several times before have saved my life by their use."

"I am no coward, I believe, but I cared not to risk an affray with those three men, well knowing what your fate would be should I fall, so I risked once more the Danite signs, and, thank Heaven, with success."

"And I thank Heaven also," fervently responded Louise.

"Now, if you will get breakfast, I will follow after those fellows to see if they have really gone," said the Pilgrim Sharp, and he strode away down the valley, while the maiden set to work preparing the morning meal, for she had an appetite, in spite of her fatigue and the peril she was in.

CHAPTER XX.

A MISCHIEF.

For nearly an hour the Pilgrim Sharp was absent from the camp, and Louise began to get very anxious about his long stay, fearing that some accident had befallen him.

"Ah! what will become of me if he is dead?" she cried.

"I doubt him, and yet I can feel no reason why I should."

"He certainly treats me with the greatest respect, and he has done much for me, while his reasons for the mystery he has assumed seem to be good."

"But this haunting suspicion in my heart that all is not well, I cannot smother."

"We cannot be so very far from Fort Bridger, and the trail we turned from down the valley must lead to some important post, and if he comes not back soon I will mount my horse, leave a note which way I have gone, and try to find some refuge, hazardous as is the undertaking."

"Ah! there he returns!"

Her eyes fell upon the quaintly-attired form of the Pilgrim Sharp, coming at a brisk walk up the valley.

His face wore a smile, and he said cheerily:

"They have gone, and I have found the trail that will lead us to the fort, so as soon as you are sufficiently rested we will start, Miss Leroy."

His words and manner cheered her, and she ate breakfast with a decided relish, and some color came into her pale face, as she mounted her horse and rode by his side away from the little camp.

The horses belonging to the Pilgrim Sharp were certainly superior animals, and most thoroughly trained.

They had worked well in harness, drawing the heavy hearse through all kinds of weather, and over the roughest trails, and yet under the saddle seemed even better.

They were full of spirit, and had the appearance of possessing great speed.

As though familiar with his surroundings the Pilgrim Sharp continued on his way, following one trail, in spite of others branching off here and there.

He seemed, too, a little anxious to press on as rapidly as possible, and Louise noticed that he frequently glanced behind them as though expecting danger from that direction.

Through valleys, across plains, over mountains they went, halting for an hour's rest in the afternoon, and then pushing on once more.

"I am anxious to get out these mountains before darkness comes on, or we will have to camp here," he said, as an excuse for his pressing on more rapidly.

But hardly had he spoken when his horse slipped, and in attempting to recover himself caught his foot on a rock and fell.

Quick and agile as he was, the Pilgrim Sharp was unable to save himself, and fell heavily against a boulder, his head striking with a force that stunned him.

The horse was upon his feet in an instant, but his rider lay where he had fallen.

With a cry of alarm Louise threw herself from her saddle, and bent over him.

"He is not dead for his heart beats, though faintly," she said.

Then she passed her hand over the bruise upon his forehead, and added:

"There is no fracture of the skull, though the blow was a severe one."

"No, he is only stunned, and I hope will soon recover."

She took a cup from the pack upon his horse,

The Pilgrim Sharp.

and hastening to a stream near, soon brought water and bathed his head.

For a long time it seemed to her that he would never return to consciousness; but at last the broad breast heaved violently, and soon after the eyes opened and were bent upon her face.

"Ah! I have been ill," he said, in a dazed way.

"No, your horse fell with you, and your head was dashed against the rock."

"But I do not think that it is anything serious," she answered.

"I hope not; in fact, I know not, or my mind would not be clear now."

"But it was a severe blow and a close one, and my head aches severely."

"But I've had too many rough knocks to care for this," and after a slight effort, he arose to his feet.

In a few moments he seemed to be himself again, and said petulantly:

"We have lost a precious half-hour through the falling of that accursed horse. I never knew him to fall before."

"Is it so very important that we get out of these mountains before dark comes on?" she asked, seeing that he seemed worried.

"Yes; for there are foes here whom I wish to avoid."

"Come—are you ready to press on?"

"Certainly; but you seem to know the country so well, I should think there would be no great danger in riding after night."

"But there is danger, as we have a trail to follow which few men care to risk by daylight."

"Curses! the infernal beast has a shoe half-off, and that accounts for his tripping."

He referred to his own horse, and raising the animal's hoof he observed that the shoe was broken in two.

In spite of her presence, a muttered curse passed his lips.

But Louise Leroy said nothing, as she felt that he was suffering from his fall, and knew that the delay was a great disappointment to him.

"What can you do now, Mr. Yale, for this rough trail will soon lame your horse so that he cannot travel?" she said.

"Ah! I shall have to be equal to the emergency," he said.

As he spoke he took from the pack which he carried behind his saddle a horse-shoe, nails and all instruments necessary, while Louise looked on with surprise.

She had known him to shoe his horses while on the Overland Trail, but had not suspected that he had brought the necessary implements along with him on horseback.

Instantly he set to work and in a short time had set a shoe upon his horse, and put an extra nail into the others.

Then he did the same for the animal ridden by Louise, and once more they resumed their way, though after a loss of nearly two hours time, and which the maiden saw fretted her companion greatly.

CHAPTER XXI.

IN VAIN.

As they continued their way the face of the country grew wilder for a while, and then their horses toiled wearily up the mountain side.

After having gained the summit, the Pilgrim Sharp drew rein for a rest, and cast his eyes down the valleys below them.

"Curses! they are coming!"

The words broke savagely from his lips, and caused Louise to start, while she quickly gazed in the direction in which he was looking.

There, just emerging from the timber in the valley below, she saw a body of horsemen.

One was in advance a few rods, and behind him, strung out in Indian file came a score of others."

"They are soldiers!"

She fairly shrieked the words.

But he answered coldly:

"You are mistaken, Miss Leroy, for would to God they were dragoons."

"But I see their uniforms distinctly, and see, they have discovered us and wave their hands."

"Ah, see! now they come on!"

"Come, we must fly, and we have no time to lose," he said, sternly.

"Fly from our friends?" she asked, haughtily.

"My poor child, these men are not our friends."

"They are United States troopers, sir, and all true soldiers are the friends of those in distress."

"Perhaps they are from my uncle's regiment."

"Miss Leroy, again I beg you to come on, for all will be lost."

"I will not fly from friends," she said firmly.

"Listen to me."

"Those men wear the uniform of United States soldiers, I admit, but I tell you frankly they are not such."

"Then what are they, sir, and how dare they wear a livery they have no right to?"

"They are Danites!"

She started, and gazed full into his face.

"I repeat it, they are Danites, for, when I followed those three men, who visited our

camp, I came upon their encampment down the valley, and I discovered them, with others, rigging themselves out in dragoon uniforms."

"I then knew that more deviltry was on foot, so have been anxious ever since, though, not caring to alarm you, I did not speak of my discovery."

"Now I beg you to come with me, for we have to descend the mountain, and then have a plain to cross before we are in safety."

"Forgive my doubts," she said frankly, extending her hand; and riding on, the descent of the mountain was begun.

It was slow and tedious, and yet they dared not urge their horses to greater speed.

"We have the consolation that the Danites must do as we have to do," said the Pilgrim Sharp.

At last the plain was reached, a stretch of several miles, and beyond, a range of mountains, which the Pilgrim Sharp informed Louise the dangerous trail led through, which he had been anxious to pass over before nightfall.

"We can do no more than reach the mountains, Miss Leroy; but once there, they cannot pursue us."

"Hail those devils are pursuing us hard."

The clank of steel against steel had caught his ears, and looking back he beheld the horsemen on the summit of the mountain.

"They have driven their cattle hard up the hill," he muttered.

"But they must come slowly down it," responded the maiden.

"They are coming down at a break-neck speed."

"Come! come, you snails, you must do better than this," he cried to the horses, and the animals were urged to the utmost.

But the horse he rode hung back, going slightly lame.

"I must have pricked him with a nail in putting on that shoe," muttered the Pilgrim Sharp.

But he did not spare the spur, and the two animals were kept at their speed.

Momentarily, however, the one limped the more, and the pursuers having now reached the level plain, came on at a clattering pace.

"Our horses have had a long jaunt for weeks, while their cattle are fresh, comparatively."

"On, you bounds!" and the Pilgrim Sharp plied the spur cruelly to his own beast, who struggled forward—though in great pain, and going almost upon three legs.

"They will overtake us," said Louise hoarsely, measuring the distance of the pursuers from them, by a quick glance over her shoulder, and then looking toward the mountain base in their front.

The eyes of the Pilgrim Sharp, who was looking ahead, suddenly dilated, and he gazed fixedly an instant upon the mountain side.

Then he said, earnestly:

"Miss Leroy, you ride on and leave me, for—"

"No, I will not desert you, come what may—Oh God!"

The last words broke from her lips with a cry of anguish, for suddenly out from the mountain side dashed a band of horsemen.

There were full half a hundred of them, all mounted upon black horses and dressed in the deepest sable clothing, while their faces were incased in crimson masks, and gloves of the same bright hue were upon their hands.

"God in Heaven! we are lost!" groaned the Pilgrim Sharp, and he drew rein, as though undecided what to do.

Then he seized a revolver in each hand, and said in a low tone:

"Before you shall fall into their hands, I will shoot you through the heart, and then die fighting them to the last!"

CHAPTER XXII.

THE VICTORY.

It certainly was a most thrilling and perilous moment for the fugitives, for, if the horsemen in their rear were Danites in the uniform of dragoons, those before them were surely none other than Mormon soldiers, and the Pilgrim Sharp and Louise Leroy were between two fires.

The lameness of the animal he rode caused the man to feel that further flight was impossible, and in drawing rein he had uttered the threat to kill her rather than have her fall into the power of the Danites.

But Louise Leroy was a plucky girl, and had no such desire to end her days, for she believed thoroughly in the principle of hoping while life should last, and she said quickly:

"No; I will take my chances, for I cannot believe that they dare harm me, and if they demand gold for my ransom I am rich enough to pay it."

"As you think best, Miss Leroy," was the answer of the Pilgrim Sharp, and replacing his revolvers, he held up his hands and called out:

"We surrender!"

A moment after a Danite officer dashed up to their side, followed by his men, who quickly circled around them, while Louise whispered to the Pilgrim Sharp:

"Try the Danite signs once more, and they may gain protection for us and release."

The Pilgrim Sharp shook his head sadly, and said aloud, addressing the Danite officer:

"Is this the Danite Band of Jack De Lee?"

"It is, and you and this lady are Major J Lee's captives; but you must ride on quick to the shelter of the hills, for that foolhardy American officer is going to attempt to recapture you," and he pointed toward where the other party of horsemen were still dashing on.

"Ha! are not those also Danites disguised as United States soldiers?" cried the Pilgrim Sharp with a strange look upon his face.

"By no means, sir.

"They are men from Colonel Lewellyn's regiment of dragoons," and the masked Danite started, as he heard a cry from Louise Leroy, while he called out:

"Form quickly, men, to meet the charge of yonder devils!"

As the words left his lips Louise Leroy suddenly brought her whip down with telling force upon the side of her horse, and the startled animal bounded away like an arrow shot from a bow.

The Pilgrim Sharp and the Danite officer both made an effort to seize the rein of the animal; but in vain, for the horse was beyond their reach in an instant, and heading directly for the coming troopers, who were now not more than two hundred yards distant, and coming on at a gallop in line of battle, their leader in advance.

"Kill her horse!" shouted one among the Danites.

"Ay, shoot her, ere she escape," cried a stern voice, and then followed the crack of a revolver.

Instantly the steed ridden by Louise Leroy uttered a snort of pain, sprung into the air, and fell heavily, while a cry of despair came from the lips of the maiden as she was hurled to the ground, where she lay as though stunned.

"Charge!" shouted the Danite leader in trumpet tones, and the band darted forward to meet the coming troopers.

Passing by the prostrate form of poor Louise, they darted on to engage the dragoons, while the Pilgrim Sharp ran to the side of the maiden and raised her in his arms.

"She is stunned by the fall, or has swooned," he muttered, just as the two bodies of horsemen met in fierce encounter.

"Here are horses, sir," said a Danite, leading up two spirited animals, and the side-saddle having been taken from the dead steed, was placed upon the back of one of the two led up to the spot by the Mormon soldier. But the Pilgrim Sharp mounted the other animal, and seeing that Louise was still unconscious, bade the Danite place the maiden before him, and that he would carry her.

This was quickly done, and, with a Danite upon either side of him, the Pilgrim Sharp rode toward the rear, carrying his precious burden, while the two bands of horsemen still engaged in a fierce combat, the dragoon officer seeming determined to cut his way through the lines of his foes, and attempt the rescue of Louise Leroy whom he saw being carried off a captive, and perhaps dead, for he had seen her thrown heavily to the ground when her horse fell dead from the Danite's bullet.

But the dragoons were too few in number to cope with the Danites, and, to save his remaining men, Eugene Crichton, for he it was, as the reader has doubtless surmised, at once ordered a retreat.

Forming in a compact mass the dragoons cut their way out, the Danites seemingly most willing to let them go, content to rest upon the laurels of having killed and wounded nearly all of them, and captured the maiden and the Pilgrim Sharp.

CHAPTER XXIII.

CAPTIVE AND CAPTOR.

WHEN Louise Leroy returned to consciousness all was darkness about her, yet she felt the presence of some one near.

"Where am I?" she asked, faintly.

Instantly a light flashed before her, and she saw that she was in a small room, evidently a cabin, and that she lay upon a bed of robes and blankets.

A rude table, several chairs, and a dark-lantern comprised the furniture, the latter having just been placed upon the table by the Pilgrim Sharp, who seemed to have just entered through a door that led into an adjoining room.

"Ah! you have recovered consciousness again, Miss Leroy, and I am most glad, for your long swoon made me very uneasy regarding you," said the Pilgrim Sharp, approaching the bed, or rather bunk upon which she lay.

Instantly she arose to her feet, and said:

"Am I a prisoner?"

"Alas! we both are, Miss Leroy," he answered, sadly.

"Yes, I recall that I tried to reach the dragoons, whom you believed to be Danites in disguise, and—"

"I certainly so believed them, Miss Leroy." "You were mistaken though, and we fled from our friends, and I am now, I suppose, the captive of Danites?"

"We both are."

"But tell me," and she spoke with sudden earnestness:

"Were the dragoons driven back?"

"They were, and most severely handled."

"And their leader?"

"Was Lieutenant Eugene Crichton, so the Danite officer said," and the Pilgrim Sharp looked her straight in the face.

"Yes, I recognized him, just as I started to fly to the aid of the dragoons."

"But was he wounded or killed?" and her voice faltered.

"No, though it is strange that he was not, for a more reckless attack I never saw."

"When he felt that all attempts were vain, he charged through the Danite line, and escaped with the few men he had left."

"He is a noble man, Mr. Yale, and, as he recognized me I know, I feel that my speedy release will be sure."

"Ah! would that I could think so."

"But the Mormons dare not hold me as a prisoner, for I am the niece of an officer in high command," she said, haughtily.

"The Mormons little care for that, Miss Leroy."

"But I will appeal to their cupidity, and offer a large ransom for my freedom."

"They will refuse it."

"How do you know, sir?" she asked, quickly, and with the same tinge of suspicion in her tone and manner which she had before shown.

"I know something of the Mormons, Miss Leroy, and Major De Lee told me to-night that you would be held as a captive at all hazards."

"What! that wretch, Major Jack De Lee, of whose cruelties I have heard so much, told you this?"

"Yes, only a short while ago."

"Then it is into his power that I have fallen?"

"Yes, Miss Leroy."

"And why are you not a prisoner?"

"I am; but though I have my freedom in this cabin, I would meet with certain death did I step outside of that door."

"Oh! what is to be done?" moaned the poor girl in agony of grief.

"I know not, though I am not one to give up hope."

"Nor I, and the Mormons shall find me a hard captive to hold," was the stern and significant remark of Louise Leroy, as she turned away from her companion and began pacing to and fro.

Suddenly she paused and asked:

"Where are we?"

"At a cabin in the mountains, and which is an advance post of the Danite band."

"You brought me here?"

"Yes, two hours ago, under a Danite guard."

"Can you summon Major De Lee, for I would speak with him?"

The Pilgrim Sharp made no reply, but went to the door and rapped upon it.

Instantly a guard appeared. He was dressed in black, had the conventional red mask, and in his right hand was a revolver.

"This lady would see Major De Lee," said the Pilgrim Sharp.

"Come with me and I will lead you to him, and you can make known the desire of the lady," answered the guard.

The Pilgrim Sharp stepped out of the door and Louise was alone with her bitter thoughts.

For some time she paced to and fro, fretting at having been led to fly from the dragoons, under the belief that they were Danites in disguise, and then she started as the door opened and a tall form entered.

"I am Jack De Lee, lady, and I have come at your command," he said in strangely soft, rich tones.

He was a man of striking appearance, with the form of perfect symmetry, clad in a sable uniform, trimmed with silver braid, and wearing a black helmet, with a sweeping plume of snowy white.

Upon his hands were red gauntlet gloves, and his entire face was shielded by a mask of metal, painted crimson, and which allowed only a pair of flashing eyes to be seen.

About his waist was a sash of woven silver thread, and in it were a pair of handsome Colt's revolvers, while suspended by a chain was a short sword, the hilt of which was studded with precious stones.

Louise Leroy fairly started at the sight of this superb personage, for she had expected to be confronted by a coarse, rude-mannered man in Jack De Lee the Danite chief.

"Is it possible that you are Major De Lee the Danite?" she faltered.

"Yes, lady, I am Jack DeLee, and wholly at your service," was the courtly response.

"How strange that a man such as you appear outwardly, can be the demon your acts credit you with," said Louise in a tone of scorn.

The Danite chief bowed, and answered in the same soft manner:

"There is an old saying, lady, that 'Satan is not as black as he is painted.'

"Perhaps that may apply to me."

"For the sake of humanity I sincerely hope so, sir."

"But I asked to see you, that I may know what is to be my fate?"

"I trust that you were not injured by your fall, lady?" he said evasively.

"No, I swooned away, I think, for I was not injured."

"But be good enough to answer my question."

"As to your fate?"

"Yes, sir."

"That I cannot tell you, lady, for I do not know."

"I am your prisoner, I believe, sir?"

"Yes, lady."

"Are you aware who I am?"

"Yes, you are the niece and ward of Colonel Lewellyn, I am informed by the strange-looking, and very eccentric genius that was captured with you."

"He has correctly informed you, sir; but may I ask where that eccentric genius is now, for he left me to seek you?"

"He became combative, and I placed him under a guard."

"I hope no harm will befall him; though he led me into this trouble, he did not intentionally do so, and I forgive him."

"As to what his fate will be I cannot tell you, lady."

"Nor what will be done with me?"

"Of that also I am in ignorance."

"It is said that you possess great power, sir?"

"Over my men, yes."

"Your word is absolute?"

"It is."

"Your acts are unquestioned?"

"They are, lady."

"Then you have the power to release me?"

The Danite chief made no reply, but shook his head.

"Listen to me, Major De Lee."

"I am all attention, lady."

"The officer commanding the dragoons who charged you so gallantly on the plain—"

"Gallantly indeed, lady."

"That officer, I say, I know well, and he recognized me, and my uncle will soon know that I am a captive to the Danites."

"Well, lady?"

"The result will be that he will do all in his power, aided by the general in command, to rescue me."

"It will be impossible, lady, and he will but throw away the lives of his men."

"Then if you speak the truth, sir, to save the lives of brave men, I have a proposition to make to you."

"Name it, lady."

"I offer you ransom for my liberty and safe conduct into the lines of the army under General Johnson."

Again the Danite shook his head.

"I am willing to pledge myself to pay a large sum for my release."

"Miss Leroy, let me tell you frankly that no sum can purchase your freedom."

"Ah! you set a high value upon me, sir," said Louise with a sneer.

"Yes, but not higher than you deserve."

"Oh, sir! why do you detain me here, for what am I to you?" and the voice trembled, and the beautiful eyes filled with tears as she asked the question.

"Miss Leroy," and the Danite chief spoke earnestly:

"You are not detained by my order, but by that of one who is far greater than I."

"Ah! to whom do you refer?" and Louise turned deadly pale.

"Brigham Young!"

She gave a low cry and sinking into a chair by the table, buried her face in her hands.

At last she started to her feet, her eyes flashing with anger; but the Danite chief had disappeared and she was alone.

CHAPTER XXIV.

THE MORMON BRIDE.

In a lovely little valley not very far from the Mormon stronghold, and overhung by wild and rugged mountains, stood a little cabin.

There was an air of comfort and neatness about it that was very inviting, and somehow one coming upon the little home, nestling away in that lone place, would expect to find there the fair face of a woman.

Nor would he be disappointed, for it was the home of one whom love had lured there, causing her to forsake kindred and friends, and a life of refinement in the Far East.

That one was known by those who were aware of her existence, and they were very few, as the Angel of the Valley, a name she had deservedly won.

A golden-haired, blue-eyed beauty, with a face of purity and a form of grace, it was no wonder that she won the hearts of many in her girlhood days.

Suitors she had by the score, for, added to her loveliness, she had the charm of wealth, having been left a fortune by her father, who had made her the controller of her own riches.

But men of fame, men of noble hearts, and men who were working their way up the ladder of prosperity and distinction, had knelt at her feet in vain, for she could not give her hand where her heart would not go.

One day, while skating upon the lake near her home, she sunk beneath the ice, and so bitter was it that none of her companions dared venture near to rescue her.

But suddenly, when all believed that she must die, a carriage halted on the highway near, and a man sprung from it, and, rushing to the lake, bounded boldly in.

He seized the drowning girl, fought his way near the stronger ice, and, refusing the aid of the young beau, called to his coachman to throw him the reins.

The man promptly obeyed, and the maiden was drawn ashore in safety, but nearer dead than alive.

Then the coachman aided his master out of danger, and forcing his way through the crowd, the daring stranger raised the form of the young girl in his arms, and springing into the carriage, bade the driver hasten up to the town.

Who the stranger was no one knew, more than that they saw his name upon the register at the inn.

But from that day the maiden loved him, and when he departed shortly after, the postmaster hinted that the lovely girl was corresponding with him.

Of course there were jealous rivals, and the maiden's kindred bade her forget a man of whom she knew absolutely nothing.

But she was not to be governed by them, and one night she left the village secretly, and then wrote back from New York that she had married her brave preserver, and wished to at once transfer her wealth into money.

This could not be done without a great sacrifice, and as her husband was anxious to return to his home in the West, they departed, he saying that he would come back and settle up affairs.

And that home?

It was to the little cabin in the mountains, which I have described, and where she dwelt with only two old servants to care for her, and who lived in a cabin but a few rods distant.

Loving her husband with a worship that was idolatrous, the young wife tried to be content in her lonely home, though he was often absent from her for days at a time, and she saw only the old servants, and some of his soldiers, for he had told her that he was an officer in service.

Upon the afternoon when the young wife is presented to the reader, she came out of her little cabin, and throwing herself into a rustic seat began to work upon some embroidery.

As she sat there she seemed very youthful, and was certainly beautiful enough with her fair, pure face, to be called the Angel of the Valley.

Presently she started, for the sound of approaching hoofs fell upon her ears.

"It is, it must be, my husband, for his messenger said he would come to-day!" she cried with joy, springing to her feet just as a horseman appeared in sight.

It was a man of striking appearance, in fact, the one who had called himself Major De Lee, in his interview with Louise Leroy.

But now he wore no crimson mask, and his face was plainly revealed.

It was a face to attract attention, to fascinate a man or a woman, and yet, when studied deeply, it was a face to fear.

The features were refined and well cut, the eyes very earnest and restless, and the mouth was winning and smiling, yet there seemed to haunt it in repose a continual sneer.

Springing from his horse, as he rode up, he clasped his young bride in his arms, and in answer to her low chiding about staying away for long weeks, he said:

"I could not do otherwise, Flo, for I had important work to do in the East."

"I have so missed you, Jack, all these days, and I dreaded that you might run into danger, for I heard old Batty and Bess talking about the coming war that you were to have with those hated Mormons."

"That I was to have?" he asked, quickly.

"Yes, so I thought they said; but I could not understand all they were talking about, and perhaps I am wrong; but I knew if there was a war you would have to fight in it, as you are a soldier."

"Batty and Bess are two infernal old fools," said the man, petulantly.

"Oh! I am sorry I told you, Jack; but they did not know I overheard them."

The man was silent a moment, and his brow grew clouded, as though his thoughts were of an unpleasant nature.

At last he led the young bride to the rustic seat, and placing himself by her side, he said:

"Flora, I have something to say to you which I fear you will not like."

She started, and asked softly:

"What is it, Jack?

"Have you heard aught that was unpleasant from my old home?"

"Oh, no; but I have deceived you in one way."

"You have deceived me, Jack?" and she turned very pale.

"Yes, Flo."

"Then if you confess it, you thereby atone, and I must forgive you."

"Then you will forgive me, Flo?" he said, softly.

"Yes, everything, everything."

"Bless you, my little wife; but I must tell you that I deceived you because I loved you, and could not give you up."

"These are strange words, Jack."

"They are true, for the moment I saw you I loved you, and to give you up would have broken my heart."

"And mine, too, Jack, for you know, since the moment you pulled me out of the lake I loved you, and I have proven it."

"You have, indeed, Flo, for you accepted my story of myself, and came here with me to this rude and lonely cabin, and not once have you upbraided me with keeping you here, when you are so well fitted to shine in society."

"Why should I, Jack?"

"I married you for yourself, and I do not care for the world."

"Did your duties allow you to remain here with me, I would be perfectly happy and rest content here forever."

"But that cannot be, Flo, for, as I said, I have deceived you."

"Oh, Jack! what have you done, for your words, your manner, lead me to fear something terrible," and she became very pale, as she clasped her tiny hands before her.

"You will doubtless think what I have done is terrible, Flo, but I could not give you up, and hence I acted as I did."

"Speak, Jack, and tell me all," she said, in a stern tone, that surprised him, so unlike her it seemed.

"I told you, Flo, that I was a soldier."

"Yes."

"But I did not tell you in what army."

"Why, what army could you be in other than that of the United States, Jack?" she asked, opening her beautiful eyes wide with surprise.

"The Mormon army, Flo."

She was upon her feet in an instant, her eyes blazing, her bosom heaving, while her face had become livid.

"Jack De Lee, do you mean what you say?" she asked in ringing tones.

"Sit down, Flo, and listen to me."

She sunk down upon the seat and gazed upon him in speechless horror.

"Yes; I am in the army of Brigham Young."

"A Mormon?" she said, with a sneer.

"Yes; a Danite chief."

"Heaven have mercy upon me!" she groaned.

"Forgive me, Flo, for thus deceiving you, but, as I have said, I could not help it, for, seeing you, I loved you, and could not give you up."

"The Prophet sent me East on private business, and there it was that I met you."

"I brought you back with me, and to keep you away from Salt Lake City, I had you come here, for I feared that the Prophet, beholding you, might be envious of me."

"Of late a war is being precipitated upon the Mormons by the United States, and we are compelled to fight to protect ourselves, and this place will not be safe for you, so I must remove you to the city, where I have a home."

"A home in Salt Lake City?" she gasped.

"Yes, and a pleasant one it is, too, and you will be happy there."

"Happy as the wife of a Mormon?" she said.

"Why can you not be, Flo?"

"Your creed, sir, I believe, permits a plurality of wives, and—"

"But I have no wife there, Flo, for the one I had died some time ago."

"Thank God for those words, Jack De Lee, for now I am, though a Mormon bride, not a guilty thing in my own sight."

"Ah, Flo, you must get over these Gentile notions and become like myself—a true believer in the Mormon creed."

"Never!"

"Do not say never, for all things are possible, especially in this far-away land."

"But now let me tell you, Flo, that you are to go to my Salt Lake home and reign there as queen."

"And I alone shall possess your heart, Jack?"

"Yes, you alone shall possess my love, Flo," he said evasively.

"And you will not have another wife?"

"Flo, the Prophet has already commanded that I should marry."

"And you have done so, for I am your bride, am I not?"

"Yes; but he commands that I take another wife."

"Another wife, Jack De Lee?" and she fairly kissed the words.

"Yes, and it is my duty to obey."

"And you intend to do so, Jack?"

"Yes, Flo; but don't look so terribly, for you shall be the queen of my heart."

"And when do you intend to take this other wife?" she asked slowly.

"I have already selected her, and she is coming now to this cabin under an escort of my men."

"She is beautiful, refined, and will be a charming companion for you, while every Mormon elder—ay, and Brigham Young himself—will envy me the possession of two such beautiful wives as will be my Flo and Louise."

"Louise?"

"Yes, her name is Louise Leroy."

"Louise Leroy?" and she fairly shrieked the name.

"Yes, Flo; but for God's sake do not look and act so!"

"Do you know Louise Leroy?"

"Ay, do I know her, Jack De Lee; and never shall you degrade her as you have me."

"Never!"

With the utterance of the last word she seized from his belt a revolver and thrust it against his heart, while she gazed into his face with the look of a tigress, and her words were cold and stern as she said:

"Now, Jack De Lee, I can avenge myself and save poor Louise Leroy!"

CHAPTER XXV.

THE TRAITOR.

WHEN the Danite known as Leo, and who had been intrusted with the care of the pack-

horse carrying the papers and gold taken from the grave, departed from the camp, leaving his two comrades to follow on behind him with the prisoners, he little dreamed that he was about to be brought face to face with a temptation which it would be hard to resist—if, indeed, he could resist it.

He had not gone very far upon the trail when he was startled by hearing two distant shots.

Instantly he halted his own and the pack-horse, and listened attentively.

No other sound came to his ears, and he wondered from whence had come the two shots.

Had his two comrades shot the young courier and the Jew peddler, he wondered?

Certainly it could not be the other way, for the courier had been securely ironed, and the Jew certainly was half-crazed with fear when he had left.

For a long time he sat in silence, awaiting the coming of his companion.

But no sound broke the stillness, other than the cry of a night-bird, or howl of a wolf.

Anxious to know what was the cause of the delay, and wondering at the two shots, he hitched the two horses, and went swiftly back on the trail.

At last he came in sight of the camp.

The fire still flickered, causing the shadows to flit grimly about, and his eyes fell upon a scene that filled him with amazement.

That scene the reader can surmise, for he saw that the vanquished had become victors, and the tables had been turned most cleverly.

Lew Fane was a brave man, and he had often taken big risks in his life; but yet he hesitated about firing upon Daring Dave and the Jew, for he was not sure of the result, and he had no desire to add his own body to those in the grave, as his failure would certainly do.

For a moment he seemed lost in hesitation, and then he turned, put his revolver back in his belt, and silently stole away.

Reaching the horses once more, he mounted, and pressed on in deep silence, his brain in a whirl, his heart seemingly on fire with the intensity of his thoughts.

"By the beard of Brigham Young I will do it!"

The words broke hoarsely from his lips, just as the dawn brightened the eastern skies, and, as if resolved upon some important act, he rode on at a more rapid pace.

After a while he came to a small stream that crossed the trail, and instead of pressing on his way, he turned abruptly up the water-bed, leading the pack-horse after him.

It was rough traveling for the horses, but the swiftly-flowing stream obliterated all tracks made by the animals, and the earnest manner in which the Danite watched the trail, showed that this object was just what he had sought to accomplish.

A ride of nearly a mile in the bed of the stream, brought the Danite to a shelf of rock, where even the iron-shod hoofs of his horse would leave no track. Out upon this he forced the animals, and then they toiled up the mountain side upon a narrow ledge that formed a most hazardous roadway, and one which there seemed no reason in following.

Suddenly the ledge terminated, right in a clump of mountain pines growing together in such a dense mass that it seemed impossible to penetrate them.

But here the Danite dismounted and deliberately began to remove the gold and papers from the pack-saddle.

This done, he pushed aside one of the scrub pines, and stepped within the thicket.

A few steps brought him to the entrance of a small cavern in the face of the rock, and into this he carried the pack-saddle and its precious load.

Then he wound a cloth over the eyes of the pack-horse, and seizing him by the bit, deliberately forced him backward toward the edge of the cliff.

Obeying the pressure upon his bit the doomed, and unsuspecting animal began to step backward, until, suddenly losing his footing, he went over the cliff, and swept downward like an arrow, to fall with a deafening splash in the waters far below.

"There, he is done for and cannot appear against me.

"Now, to seek my chief and make my report that my comrades were killed by soldiers appearing upon the scene, the prisoners were rescued, and the pack-horse and his precious

had captured, while I barely escaped with my life.

"Once I have put them on this false scent, then will I act for myself."

"Hal hal hal at last the dawn is breaking for Leo Fane, and these wilds shall know him no more."

So saying the traitor Danite mounted his horse and rode away from the hidden cavern, going as he had come, by the ledge, and through the bed of the stream.

CHAPTER XXVI.

A SPY UPON A SPY.

LEO, the Danite, had believed himself an honest man, and would doubtless lived and died in the belief that he would do no act against the teaching of the Mormon creed, and the wishes of his Prophet.

But, like many another he had never been sorely tempted, and therefore did not know his strength of resistance.

The large amount of gold entrusted to his care, the death of his two companions, and the thought that the United States soldiers could be made the scape-goats, was too much for his elastic conscience, and the result was that he determined to desert his creed and his people, and make his way to other scenes, as soon as he could do so, and there live upon the riches he had thus obtained.

He had it in his heart to carry the papers to Brigham Young, convinced that they must be of great value; but why should they be saved and not the gold, he feared would be the query of his chief.

No, he must do no half-way work, now that he had turned his back upon his Mormon creed, a fact that would never have transpired, had the gold not been with the papers.

Again renewing the trail he had hastened on to seek the haunts of the bands of Mormon soldiers, and make his report.

He pushed his horse hard, for the sake of effect in the story he had to tell, and at once sought the Danite chief.

That person, Major De Lee, was not at his mountain stronghold, but had gone on into the city.

And thither Leo, the Danite, went, and halted before the pleasant home of his chief.

But the major was not there, and Leo deemed it his duty to make his report to the Prophet, so thither he went, and gained an immediate audience.

In a few words he told the story he had concocted, of the death of his comrades at the hands of soldiers, the capture of the treasure-bags, and of the iron and tin boxes of papers, and his own narrow escape.

Brigham Young paced the floor the while in moody thought, and Leo did not like the expression upon his face.

At last the Prophet said:

"I feared this loss when I learned that there was a woman in the case."

"A woman, mighty Prophet?" said Leo, in surprise.

"Yes."

Leo said nothing, but the look upon his face was not feigned amazement, and so Brigham Young read it; but he said:

"Remember, my man, you are addressing your Prophet now, and not your immediate chief, so tell me what you know of this woman."

Of a woman in the case Leo certainly knew but little.

He had been ordered, with his two companions, to go to the rescue of the camp, open the grave and bring off its contents.

He had heard some of the band say that a strange man had been seen with a young girl in the mountains, but had proven himself a Danite by giving the signs and countersigns, and had, of course, not been molested.

This was all that Leo could tell, and he told it.

The Prophet listened to his story, and convinced of its truth, said:

"Well, my man, I wish you for a special duty."

Leo bowed low, but made no reply.

"I wish you to return to the mountains and discover just who this stranger was, and also where he has hidden the girl that was with him."

"But, mighty Prophet, if my own band find me away from duty I will be ordered back to the stronghold and punished."

"I will give you papers to protect you."

Leo knew that this was sufficient, and that

Major De Lee would not dare go against the Prophet's orders, and he felt happy at heart, for, while upon a secret mission for the great leader of the Mormons, he certainly would have the very opportunity he desired of making his own escape.

"I wish you, my son," continued the Prophet, "to find out just what mystery is being hidden from me by those whom I trust, and to do this you must spy upon the movements of your own chief."

"Major De Lee?"

"Yes."

"And more, I will protect you if you bring me the news I seek, and you shall not want for gold, either."

"Now go to my stables and select a horse there to your liking, and set forth upon your journey."

"With these secret symbols which I give you, not even your chief will dare unmask your face."

"Go, and return only when you have solved the mystery of this woman, and where she is kept in hiding."

The Danite bowed low and departed, wearing about his neck the symbol of protection which the Prophet had given him.

Going to the stables, he selected the very best horse there, to his liking, and mounting, rode away.

But he little dreamed that the cunning Prophet of the Mormons had at once called one of his own secret league, and said to him:

"Haslip, I have just sent yonder man on secret service to the mountains.

"Mount your horse and follow him, and if you see him in secret converse with Major Jack De Lee he will have proved a traitor to me, so watch your chance and bring me his scalp."

"I shall obey, mighty Prophet," assured the spy upon a spy, and soon after he rode off upon the trail of Leo the Danite, and which led to the fastnesses of the Mormon bands in the mountains.

CHAPTER XXVII.

BUCKSKIN MOSES STRIKES A TRAIL.

"Vell, mine frient, I vill go up mit t'e Mormons an' sell mine goats."

So said Buckskin Moses to Daring Dave Harrington, the young courier, before he had been long in camp.

"You'll go up and get your neck stretched, my jewel," said Dave.

"No, I ish no gentile, only von poor Hebrew trying to make a leetle monish."

"Well, you had better sell out in camp here, than go among the Mormons and lose all."

"But you are your own master, Buckskin Moses, and can do as you like."

"Thank you, mine frient, so I vill do."

"When do you start on the Mormon trail, Moses?"

"I goes by to-night."

"Well, luck go with you; but when you have a rope about your neck, remember Dave Harrington warned."

"Yesh, mine frient, I vill," and Buckskin Moses set about his preparations for departure.

Daring Dave watched him for awhile and then went out of the cabin and sought Lieutenant Eugene Crichton.

He found that young officer lying upon his cot looking pale and haggard, after the hardships he had undergone the past few days.

"Ah! Dave, it is you."

"Come in!" he said pleasantly.

The young courier entered and took a camp-stool, while he said in a kindly tone:

"You are not looking well, sir."

"I am worried, Dave, terribly so, for there is one whom I confess to you, that I love better than all else in this world, now in the hands of the Mormons."

Daring Dave had often been with Eugene Crichton on many a scout, and between the two existed a strong friendship.

The young courier also had heard that the officer was engaged to the niece of Colonel Lewellyn, and, with his lady-love in the power of the Mormons, he could understand his sorrow and anxiety.

"Is there no chance of her rescue, sir?" said Dave.

"Oh! the general intends to move in the matter of course, and Colonel Lewellyn will be sent under flag-of-truce to demand her of old Brigham."

"But great bodies move slowly, and red-tape business loses many precious horses, Dave,

so that the old Mormon will have time to lay all of his plans and concoct his lies, for of course he will say he knows nothing about the capture of Miss Leroy."

"Well, lieutenant, why don't you move in the matter?"

"How can I, Dave?" and Eugene Crichton sprung from the bed and faced the courier.

"I do not believe, sir, that an army can secure Miss Leroy, but I do believe that two or three good men working secretly, can do so."

"Dave, you have some plan in your mind for the rescue of Miss Leroy. Quick, tell me of it!"

"No, lieutenant, I have found no plan; but I sought you to tell you that the Jew, whom I christened Buckskin Moses, goes to Salt Lake to-night."

"They'll kill the fool."

"So I told him; but, lieutenant, that Jew is no fool, and I am convinced he is playing a deep game of some kind."

"If he is a Mormon spy I would feel surprised and pained, for I like the fellow; but as he goes to the Mormons, I thought that perhaps we might make use of him."

"How can we, Dave?"

"Follow him, and if we find that he is square, he will be the very man to find out for you where Miss Leroy is concealed."

"Dave, you are my friend, and I will take your advice and go at once to the colonel and get leave for a few days."

"I will do the same, lieutenant, and there is one other I would like to have go, though not with us."

"Who is that, Dave?"

"Jim Bridger the scout, sir."

"There is no better man."

"I do not say for him to go with us, sir, but to follow on our trail, while we follow that of the Jew, and it will not take us long to find out just what this Hebrew is up to."

"Of course the peril is great, sir, as you know."

"And the peril to Miss Leroy is greater, Dave."

"I am feeling myself once more, and shall at once get leave and make my preparations for departure, and you do likewise. But will you see the scout, Bridger?"

"Yes, sir, for he calls me his boy, you know, and will do as I wish in the matter."

"Just at dark, sir, I will come here for you."

Daring Dave then left the cabin, and seeking the commanding officer asked to be let off duty for a few days.

The request was readily granted, and then the courier sought the camp of the scouts and guides.

Of all the men attached to the army, in and about the fort, there was no more important personage than Jim Bridger the scout.

He knew the mountains and plains of that far land as he did his own camp.

He had hunted and trapped in the wilds where other white men dared not go, and his name was a terror to the Indians.

A man of giant strength, tough as a pine-knot, with the courage of a lion and the cunning of a red-skin, he was an enemy to be shunned, and a friend to be prized.

"Waal, Davy my boy, has yer come over ter see ther old man?" asked the old scout as the courier came up and joined him, as he was engaged in rubbing up his weapons.

"Yes, Jim, I have come to ask a favor of you."

"Granted, Davy, before yer axes it," was the hearty reply; and then the old scout added with a wink:

"Beenbettin' ag'in' keerds too heavy I guesses, an' wants a leetle dust ter stake yer."

"I has it, boy, evy time yer needs it, tho' I never know'd yer ter go broke afore."

"Nor am I broke this time, Jim, for it is not dust that I want."

"Shout out what it are, Davy, an' ef I has it, you kin git it."

"Well, I am going off on a little scout for a few days, and Lieutenant Crichton is going with me."

"A galorous feller he are too, Davy; one ter swing ter."

"He is, indeed, Jim; but the truth is, he is engaged to Miss Leroy, the niece of Colonel Lewellyn—"

"Ah, yes, ther gal as got stole from her home East."

"Yes, and she is now in the possession of the Mormons."

"Thet news were flyin' around camp a icettle bit ago."

"But, perceed, Davy, with yer talkin'."

"Well, I picked up a Jew peddler in coming over the Overland, and though he doesn't appear to know much, I think he's got it in him to be very different, for he tipped over two Danites that bad us foul, and yet pretended to be very much alarmed at his act."

"He carries about with him a perfect arsenal, but I notice that every weapon is in perfect order, and ready for use."

"Now, he starts to-night for the Mormon camps, he says to sell his wares, knowing that he will get fabulous prices for them, and Lieutenant Crichton and myself intend to follow him, and try to find out just what he will pan out."

"Yes, Davy."

"And I want you to follow on our trail, and meet us somewhere in the Uintah mountains, say at the old Danite fort."

"I'll be thar, or tharabouts, Davy."

"Good! now we start as soon as it is dark."

"You an' ther leftenant?"

"Yes."

"And ther Jew?"

"He has gone by this time."

"Waal, so far good."

"Now, what are ther favor yer hes ter ax me?"

"I have asked it, for it is to follow on our trail."

"I'll be thar, Davy, sart'in, as yer knows when I gives my word."

"I know that well, Jim, for I can tie to you every time," and so saying, Daring Dave returned to his camp, and found that Buckskin Moses had already departed.

In fact the Jew was pointed out far in the distance, climbing the mountain-side, and leading his weary-looking but good horse after him, while the pack-mule followed in the rear, taking a mouthful of grass whenever the opportunity offered.

Arriving upon the hill-top, Buckskin Moses halted for rest, and surveyed the scene in the valley.

Long and earnestly he gazed upon the grandeur and beauty of the view that met his gaze, and then once more went on his way, this time mounting his horse.

Even when night fell he did not halt to camp, but continued on the trail with a seemingly perfect knowledge of the locality.

After several hours' pressing on in the darkness, he turned into a little canyon and came to a halt.

After watering his animals at a stream that flowed near, he staked them out, and wrapping himself in his blanket, went supperless to bed.

With the dawn he was awake, and soon had a fire made, and his frugal breakfast prepared, after which he indulged in the luxury of a cigar, while he walked off toward the head of the canyon.

Suddenly he halted, and upon the brink of a large basin of water, formed by the stream that wound its way through the gorge.

There, only a few rods from him, was a dead horse, saddleless, but with a bridle upon him.

Attentively the Jew looked at the animal, narrowly searched the surroundings of the basin and stream, and then cast his eyes upward to a ledge far above, and from whence he seemed to surmise that the horse had fallen.

Seeking a rock, against which the head of the animal rested, he most carefully examined the bridle and the horse, whose cuts and bruises, showed that he had fallen from the ledge into the stream.

As though he had formed some theory for the presence of the animal there, and also with an eye to business, Buckskin Moses took off the bridle, and walked rapidly back to his camp.

Seeing that all was secure there, he was about to venture forth from the canyon on foot, when he started back, and sprung to a place of concealment.

A moment he rested there, while distinctly to his ears came the sound of iron hoofs falling upon the rocky trail.

Then he cautiously left his retreat, and slowly followed up the steep mountain side, on the trail of the one whom he had seen pass the entrance to the canyon.

A climb of some five minutes, and he came to the end of the ledge, for it terminated against the side of the cliff. But before him were two horses, fastened to a pine tree, though no riders were visible.

Buckskin Moses stood a moment as though undecided, and then very coolly took up a position behind the scrub pine, which was thick enough to hide him thoroughly.

He noticed that the two horses were superb animals, one of them saddled and bridled, and the other led by a lariat, so there could not be more than one rider.

And, that rider he determined to await the coming of.

Making himself comfortable, and with a large Colt's revolver in his right hand, he waited most patiently, in no way exhibiting the great fear which had possessed him when in danger before.

But suddenly he started, for some one was coming.

It was not the rider he was looking and waiting for, that was evident, as he came up the ledge.

But he was mounted, rode slowly, and his eyes were fixed upon the trail he seemed to be following.

Just then, he halted, dismounted, and bitching his horse over a jagged point of rock, came on up the ledge.

He was dressed in black, his face was hidden beneath a crimson mask, and red gloves covered his hands, so that Buckskin Moses knew that he must be a Danite.

Upon approaching the horses the Danite gazed an instant at them, and then stepped cautiously to the thicket of scrub pines which were at the termination of the ledge.

Drawing a pine bush to one side, he peered cautiously into the thicket, and then slowly drew his revolver.

Resting it upon a limb, as though to steady it and make his aim sure, he drew a long breath, as though to nerve himself to the deadly work he was about to perform, for that the muzzle of his revolver covered a human heart, Buckskin Moses did not for a moment doubt.

CHAPTER XXVIII.

FOILED.

WHEN Flora, the Danite's bride, seized the pistol from the belt of the man who had so cruelly deceived her, she was transformed from the loving wife, with the nature of a dove, into a tigress hunting for prey.

He had deceived her as to what he was, and made her the wife of a Mormon.

But that, perhaps, she might have forgiven, as he had told her that his former wife was dead, and that no other mistress reigned in his city home, or over his heart.

But when he coolly informed her that he intended to marry again, her heart turned to bitterness at once.

And more, when that other one was known to her, and loved by her—for the two, Flora and Louise, had been schoolmates together for two years in Boston.

And that dearly loved schoolmate, Louise Leroy, the Danite's young wife was told, was to become his wife by the Mormon creed.

No wonder, then, that it made the poor young woman almost mad with the thought of what she was and another was to become.

When she leveled the revolver at Jack De Lee, he saw that she was in deadly earnest, and that her intention was to kill him.

But his nerve did not forsake him for an instant, and he said, quietly:

"Flo, take my life if you will, for I am willing to die by your hand."

"So help me High Heaven, I will kill you, Jack De Lee, unless you swear by all that is holy that you will not drag poor Louise Leroy down to infamy through a so-called marriage of your accursed faith."

"Then you would see her sacrificed, Flo?" he said.

"Not by being bound to you."

"If I do not make her my wife she will be sacrificed."

"How mean you, sir?"

"As she has been intended for my wife, she can therefore marry no other man, and she will, by our creed, have to end her own life."

"Oh, God! this is terrible!" cried the young wife.

"It is our creed, Flo, and no Mormon breaks a law made by God and the Prophets."

"Heaven's curse rest upon such a creed, Jack De Lee."

"But I believe that it would be better for Louise Leroy to die by her own hand, than become your wife."

"You are jealous, Flo."

"I am not jealous, sir, for I now begin to hate you."

"Well, you must know that if I do not marry your friend, Louise Leroy, the Prophet will force me to take some other wife."

"Is this true?" she asked quickly.

"It is."

"You swear it?"

"I do, and I thought that as you and Miss Leroy were friends, it would be the better for you under the circumstances."

"No, no, Jack De Lee, no two women can share the heart of one man, and still be friends, and this law of nature proves the falsity, the hollowness, the enormity of your creed."

"No, I have you in my power, and by killing you I can avenge myself and save poor Louise, and therefore I shall kill you, and may God forgive me!"

"Hold! hear me, Flo," he cried, as she again raised the weapon.

"By killing me you will not save Louise Leroy, for she will be sacrificed, and your fate will be—"

"Death, sir, for I shall, when I know you are dead, send a bullet through my own heart."

"Flo, put up that weapon, for it will be time enough to avenge yourself, when you are convinced that I mean you wrong."

"Is it not a wrong to me to marry me as you did, when secretly you were a Danite?"

"Is it not a wrong to me, to bring me here, and now tell me that your creed forces you to take another wife?"

"No, you are in my power now, and with your accursed creed, I know not what you might be tempted to do."

"I loved you once, ay, only an hour ago, Jack De Lee, with all the intensity of my nature."

"I made you my idol, and I find you unworthy, and I am willing to die."

"But I shall first try to save poor Louise Leroy, be my end what it may."

"Now, if you know a prayer taught you in childhood by your mother, say it, and do not die in the faith you have adopted as your own."

"Farewell, Jack, and may God forgive you and me too!"

He saw that she was in deadly earnest.

He saw too that there was not the slightest quiver to her hand that held the revolver, and he had taught her to shoot, and knew well her unerring aim.

What he did he knew must be done at once, and he called out quickly:

"One moment, Flo, I implore you, for if you slay me now, my Danites coming yonder, will tear you to pieces."

She was taken off her guard, turned quickly to see who was approaching, and with the bound of a panther he was upon her, and his iron grip upon the weapon she held.

A cry of frenzy broke from her lips, and for an instant she tried to free the weapon from his grasp; but realizing the utter fruitlessness of the effort, she released her hold upon it, and sinking upon the rustic seat, burst into tears.

"Flo, I have saved you from committing a great crime, in taking my life," he said softly.

But she made no reply, and he went on:

"Now, I do not wish to be harsh with you, so do as I say, and all will be well."

"But resist, and I have the force and will use it."

"What are your commands," she asked, with a coolness that surprised him, as she arose to her feet and faced him.

Her face was livid, her eyes flashing, but she was perfectly calm, a calmness that caused him to feel uneasy.

But he said in the same low tone:

"My wishes, not my commands, Flora, are that you at once get ready and accompany me to my city home."

"I will be ready in a few minutes; but where is Louise Leroy?" she asked.

"She is not here, and, since I see that you take her coming to heart so, I may let her return to her friends, if I can so arrange it, for, Flo, I will do anything in my power to prove my love for you, and only told you what I did because I was bound by my creed to do so."

"Come, cheer up, little woman, and all may be well yet, for the Prophet may grant me permission to have but one wife."

"God bless you, Jack, for those words," cried the young wife, and she threw herself

into the arms of the man whom a moment before she had said she hated and would have slain had his nerve not saved him from her.

"Come, Flo, get ready, and we will ride into the city," he said somewhat uneasily, and soon after she rode away from her little cabin home by the side of the man who had so deceived her, and against whom in her heart arose the feeling that he was then playing her false.

CHAPTER XXIX.

DIAMOND CUT DIAMOND.

THROUGH the guards at the outskirts of the Mormon city Major De Lee and his young wife passed, for the Danite chief was known to all, and in a pleasant part of the town he halted before a handsome house.

"Here is your home, Flo, and I hope sincerely that you will be happy," he said.

She seemed delighted with the pretty abode and all about it, and kissed him again and again as though in thankfulness, while she said archly:

"If this is a specimen Mormon home, Jack, there must be some happiness in Salt Lake City."

"Yes, Flo, there is much happiness here, as you will find," he said, and then, telling her that he must visit the Prophet at once, but would soon return, he left the house.

"Is she playing me false, or has she forgiven me?" he muttered as he went along to the home of Brigham Young.

False himself to everything in life, he naturally felt a suspicion of all with whom he came in contact.

Arriving at the head-quarters of the Prophet, he sent in his name for an audience, and was readily admitted to the presence of his leader.

"Welcome back, Major De Lee, after your long absence.

"I received your message that you were again in Mormon-land, and have been surprised that you did not come before to report," said Brigham Young.

"I was detained, sir, for I was compelled to leave others to look after the papers while I sought you, and being hotly pressed by a squadron of Lewellyn's dragoons, I was forced to fight them."

"Then this will precipitate matters, I fear," said the Prophet anxiously.

"I know not the result, sir; but, being attacked, I was forced to defend myself, and beat the dragoons off."

"You did right, De Lee, for they shall have blow for blow; but was there no cause of their attack?"

"None, sir, that I could see."

"Had you no prisoners they sought to secure?"

"None, sir," and the face of the Danite chief flushed slightly, as he remembered the fair captive, whom the dragoons had made such a gallant effort to wrest from his power.

The Prophet made no sign that he doubted the major, but asked in an indifferent tone:

"By the way, major, do you know whether any of my people are bringing women into the lines and not reporting them?"

"I could not tell you, sir," answered De Lee, with a guilty conscience pricking him.

"I wish you would have an eye to such work."

"I will, sir."

"And promptly bring before me any one whom you suspect is playing a secret game of the kind."

"Your orders shall be obeyed, sir, and now that I have returned I will do all in my power to see if such a rumor can be true."

"I know you will, De Lee, and I spoke to you upon the subject, as it was reported that a very beautiful young woman had been seen riding alone in the mountains, yet never coming into the city."

"It may be a wife of some of my officers, sir."

"Perhaps; but you certainly do not permit this!"

"I do not, sir; but while absent upon the duty that called me to the States, they may have taken advantage, to bring some favorite wife up into the mountains for a few days."

"But I will soon ascertain if such be the case."

"Do so; but when may I expect the papers you brought me from my emissaries in the States?"

"They are coming, sir, under a Danite guard."

"You do not seem to know that they have been captured."

"Great God! no!" and De Lee was upon his feet, his face white.

"It is true, major, for the Danite guard was surprised by soldiers and their pack-horse, containing the papers, was captured, while two of the men were slain, and the other escaped and brought me the tidings."

"This is indeed startling news, sir; but where is this man who escaped?"

"I have sent him off on a special duty for me, and upon his return will have him report to you."

The major bowed, yet made no reply, while he felt uncomfortable, for his leader seemed to be too well informed to please him, as regarded his movements.

As a sudden thought flashed through his mind, he said:

"Prophet, perhaps I can clear up the mystery, for, as you may remember, I told you that I had a wife, whom I was trying to win over to our faith."

"I recall that you said so."

"Well, sir, that she might become a good Mormon, I took matters quietly with her, led her to believe that I was not what I am, and gave her a home in the mountains, until she would be brought over to the true faith."

"Upon my way here I stopped at the cabin, and she accompanied me to my home in the city, where she will remain, for I have won her over to Mormonism."

"Ah! that accounts for it; but is she so very beautiful, De Lee, for the lady referred to by my spies, is said to be exquisitely lovely."

"So I think her, sir; but you will soon see for yourself."

"De Lee, I am glad you told me this, for frankly, I confess that I held suspicion against you."

"Prophet!"

"Nay, do not feel angered, for your words have explained away all doubts."

"But your desire to go East, as you said upon most important private business, and at a time when I could ill spare you, I confess I could not wholly understand, especially when it was reported that a mysterious woman was riding about the mountains, and protected by the Danite badge."

"Now you doubtless need rest, so return home, and to-morrow make a thorough inspection of our outer lines, for you must know that I fear that Gentile general, Albert Johnson, may pounce down upon us at any moment."

The Danite chief bowed low before his superior, and departed, muttering to himself:

"The old man suspects me yet, I can plainly see; but he shall not know of the presence of Louise Leroy in the district, until she is my wife."

CHAPTER XXX.

A SHOT AT RANDOM.

MAJOR JACK DE LEE was in no very pleasant mood, when he left his home in town, early on the following morning, after his interview with the Prophet.

Though a good Mormon, he was yet a schemer for his own interests, and allowed no creed to stand between him and the carrying out of his own ends.

He feared that the Prophet might in some way learn that the fight with the dragoons was on account of Louise Leroy, and naturally he would be asked who she was, and where she was.

He was therefore anxious to go to his mountain camps, and seeking out all of his men who had been in that fight, to send them to some distant point, and there keep them, until the affair should be dropped.

Although the Prophet had professed to trust him wholly once more, and said he was satisfied regarding the mysterious woman seen in the mountains, the cunning major well knew that it was a case of diamond cut diamond between them, each one doubting the other.

Mounted upon a splendid animal, attired in a new uniform and wearing the crimson mask and gloves of the Danites, Jack De Lee rode out of the town and pressed rapidly on up into the mountains.

Arriving at one of his camps, he called an officer to him and at once gave the orders for the exiling of the band that had been in the fight with the dragoons to a distant point where they could remain unquestioned.

"And now, Murdock, what about the lady?" he asked the officer.

"I conducted her in safety to the cabin, sir," was the answer.

"And left her there?"

"Yes, chief, in charge of the old man Batty and his wife."

"You gave them my orders that she was to be a prisoner, though she should not suspect that she was guarded?"

"I did, chief."

"I thank you, Murdock, and you shall not be forgotten, I assure you."

"Now get your men off as soon as possible into the Uintah Range, and when you report to me, do so by some courier who was not in the fight with the dragoons."

So saying Major De Lee mounted his horse and rode on to other outposts, determined to be able to send the Prophet word that night that he had personally gone the rounds of every foot of the line under his command.

"The old man will think I am stirring lively after my trip, and it will have a good effect."

"But now to drop in *en passant* to pay a little visit which the Prophet shall not know about."

He turned into a wild gorge as he spoke, and after a ride of a mile, came upon a cabin nestling away under the mountain's shelter.

It was the same cosey little home where bad dwelt Flora, the young Mormon wife.

Riding up to the door, De Lee dismounted and threw his bridle-rein to an old man who approached.

"Well, Batty, is all well?"

"Yes, chief."

"And the lady?"

"Is at her breakfast, sir, for she slumbered late this morning."

"Your wife is with her?"

"She is, chief."

"Say to Bess that I desire her to request for me an interview with the lady."

The old man went around to the rear of the cabin, while Major De Lee threw himself into the rustic seat, which had been the favorite retreat of poor Flo.

Hardly had he done so when his quick eye detected a skulking form dart down behind a large boulder up on the mountain-side.

He showed no sign that he had discovered it, but took out his revolver cautiously and placed it beside him, while he pretended to read a letter which he had taken from his pocket.

But his eyes went above the written page, and rested upon the boulder.

Thus watching he saw the branch of a tree slowly shone above the rock and remain stationary, and then his eagle eyes detected a human head behind it.

Taking out his handkerchief, he dropped it upon the seat by his side, and over the revolver, and picking it up the weapon was in his hand.

Then, quick as a flash, the revolver was thrust forward, the report followed, and rising coolly, the Danite chief walked up the hillside, just as old Batty came rushing around the cabin in dire alarm.

"Oh, chief! I feared troubles for you," he cried.

"Oh, no, I merely shot at a bird, whose plumage I want."

"What said the lady?" was the very cool response.

"She will see you, sir."

"Shall I hunt for the bird you killed?"

"No, Batty, I will get it, for I know just where it fell."

"You go to the lady, and say that I will soon join her, and then lead my horse down to the stable and feed him," and Major De Lee strode on up the mountain side toward the boulder, above which he had just sent a bullet flying with deadly intent.

CHAPTER XXXI.

LOUISE LEROY MAKES A DISCOVERY.

HAVING so cleverly gotten rid of old Batty, Major De Lee went on up the mountain side to see the effects of his shot.

It had been a random shot, as it were, for, though he had a moment before, distinctly seen a human head behind the branch of cedar above the rock, he was not sure that it had not been withdrawn before he fired.

A dead shot, he had aimed directly at the spot where he knew the head would be, if it had not been withdrawn, and he saw the

branch of cedar drop with the crack of the pistol.

It was a long shot for a revolver; but he knew just what his weapons would do, if sighted straight, and he did not doubt the result, if the head had remained where he had seen it.

Reaching the boulder, he passed around it, his revolver cocked and ready, to guard against surprise, and stopped suddenly as he beheld a form lying in a heap at his feet.

It was a human form, clad in buckskin, and one hand grasped tightly the little cedar bough which he had held above the rock.

But the face was hidden from sight, resting as it was upon the ground, just as he had sunk down at the Danite's shot.

By his side, leaning against the rock, was a rifle, and about his waist was a belt with a bowie-knife and two pistols.

Turning him over, the Danite chief slightly started, as he caught sight of the face of the dead man, for dead he was, the bullet having crashed into his forehead.

"Ha! it is the secret spy of the Prophet, and he was sent by my esteemed master to dog my trail.

"So be it, he will never return with his report, and I must send two of my trusty fellows here to-night to carry him off and secretly bury him.

"Forewarned is forearmed, my good Prophet, and I shall know now just what confidence you place in me, and act accordingly.

"But I should not blame you, for I have spies upon your movements, and upon the actions of every officer I have."

"Ah, me! this Mormon life is a career of perfect espionage, and every man is looked upon as treacherous.

"Now to see the fair Lady Louise," and, so saying, Major De Lee retraced his way to the cabin, and so carelessly, that Louise Leroy, who was watching him from a window of the cabin, little dreamed that he had been standing above the body of a man whose life he had just taken.

At the door he was met by Louise, who bowed coldly to him.

Her face was very pale, yet firm and fearless it looked, whatever her heart might feel.

"I hope that Miss Louise is well, and feels rested after the fatigues of her long ride," he said, in his courtly way.

She gazed an instant upon his superb physique, noted his elegant uniform and his courtly manner, and then fixed her eyes upon the mask which so surely shut out his face, while she said:

"I believe that I address Major De Lee, the Danite; but, as you seem to fear to show your face, I can only guess as to who you are by your figure and uniform."

He felt the sarcasm of her words, and replied:

"I am Major De Lee, Miss Leroy, and I am masked, for it is a custom of the Danites to cover their faces just now, and I follow the custom."

"May I ask, sir, what decision you have come to in regard to my release?"

"I fear, Miss Leroy, that you will have to remain in captivity, for now that you are within the Mormon lines, the Prophet will never hear of your leaving them."

"Not by exchange?" she quickly asked.

"There is no one, Miss Leroy, that could be exchanged for you."

"As for myself, I would not give you up in exchange for General Albert Sydney Johnson, yes, and his army thrown in."

"You prize me, indeed, most highly," she said, with scorn, and then added:

"Then it reduces itself to a money transaction, so name your price, sir."

"As I before told you, Miss Leroy, no ransom will be taken for you."

"In God's name! what, then, is to be my fate?" she cried, in alarm.

"Are you so bitterly opposed to the Mormon faith, Miss Leroy, as to refuse to become a believer?"

"Opposed to it!"

"Why, sir, I loathe to scorn the very name of Mormon," she said, with her face full of withering contempt.

"My dear Miss Leroy, I beg you to hear me, for I wish to talk plainly to you."

"I will listen, sir, if you do not insult me by asking if I can see one virtue in a Mormon's creed."

"You are severe, for even the heathen have virtues."

"Yes, but their ignorance excuses their acts, in many cases; but you, sir, a man of courtly address, refinement of manner, and possessed of education, have no reason for having become what you are."

"I am a Mormon."

"And hence I loathe you."

"Pray do not say that, but bear what I have to say."

"You are a captive in the Mormon lines."

"You are beautiful, and you can reign a queen among women."

"Now tell me, were you to know that there was one man, a Mormon we will say, who had been born a gentleman, possessed refinement and education, loved you with his whole heart, would you loathe him?"

"I could not feel contempt, sir, even for a brute that loved me; but I would shun such a person as one I deemed not true and good."

"Frankly answered, Miss Leroy: but now tell me, if he swore to love you alone, only to have you for a wife, and devote himself to you until death, would you be content to marry him?"

"Never."

"Under no circumstances?"

"None."

"I have your answer, but you shall have a chance to retract it, for I tell you that I love you, and that I will live for you alone, while, if you refuse to become my wife, may God have mercy upon you, for the fate you will suffer, it will be beyond my power to prevent."

"That I love you, you know, and my actions go to prove, for I have sought to gain you for my wife, Louise, for long years."

"See! now you know me as I am, and can understand that my love for you alone led me to deceive you and bring you here."

He threw off his helmet and mask as he spoke, and stood revealed before her.

"Rufus Yale!" she cried in a tone of anguish.

"Yes, I am your protector you knew as the Pilgrim Sharp," was his low reply.

"A Mormon Danite," she said with intense scorn.

"Yes, and one who devotes his life to you, Louise."

"Become my wife and save yourself from the fearful doom that awaits you, if you refuse," and seizing her hand he dropped on his knees before her.

CHAPTER XXXII.

CAUGHT IN A TRAP.

WHEN Buckskin Moses saw that the Danite he was watching, was about to draw trigger, upon whatever, or whoever he had discovered in the thicket, he threw forward his own weapon and fired.

With the report the Danite dropped in his tracks, still clutching his revolver, and, after a convulsive movement lay motionless.

The shot rattled cway among the hills like a platoon of musketry, and then all was quiet again, the two horses seeming hardly to notice the discharge.

But Buckskin Moses kept his place behind the pine tree, and waited, his weapon still in hand.

He had not very long to wait, before he beheld the top of the trees swaying at one place, and then another as though some one was cautiously making their way through them.

By keeping his eyes upon the moving branches, he knew just when and where the man would appear, who was coming out of the thicket.

Presently a head was thrust cautiously forth, and the Jew saw that the face was covered with a red mask.

That the one who thus appeared beheld the form of the dead man was evident, for quickly he jerked his head back, and for some moments a dead silence followed.

Then the head again appeared, and this time without a mask covering the face.

It was a dark, handsome face, of a man of thirty, and wore the impress of one who had led a wild life.

Cautiously the man stepped forth from the thicket, and bent over the prostrate form at his feet.

"By Heaven! it is one of the Prophet's spies," he cried, seeming to recognize the man, from whom he tore the crimson mask.

"Yes, he has been sent by the Prophet upon my track."

"A thief sent to catch a thief, a spy upon a spy."

"But who fired that shot?"

"Ab! he had tracked me here, and was perhaps going to kill me, when his revolver went off accidentally and he fell by his own hand."

"So be it, I am in luck."

"And so ish I, mine friend!"

The Danite started, turned, and then stood motionless, for a revolver-muzzle was pressed hard against him, and just over his heart.

"That accursed Jew, as I live!"

"Yesh, I ish t'e Jew, ant I t'inks det we meets pefore, for I knows you py t'e style of you in generals."

"I ish glat to see you, mine friends."

"I cannot say the same for you, Jew; but tell me, who killed that man?"

"My pistol vent off mighty suddint, ant he dies mighty suddint too."

"Yes, and I'll have to take you in for a highway robber, instead of a peddler, and to kill a Danite is a bad business, you'll find."

"Yesh, it's a pad pizziness; but I guess me dat I kills anoder one pretty quick."

"Now you joost keep stills, while I takes somedings from you dat may go shoot mighty quick."

The Danite dared not move, and Buckskin Moses disarmed him in a style that was neat and thorough.

"Now you don't hunt somepodies, and I fix you petter ash dat."

Still keeping his revolver against the heart of his prisoner, the Jew drew out a pair of handcuffs and clasped them about the wrists of the Danite.

"For Heaven's sake, man, what do you mean?" gasped the now thoroughly alarmed Danite.

"I tell you pooty quick," was the cool reply, as the Danite was made fast to a scrub pine.

Then entering the thicket, Buckskin Moses came upon the cavern and its contents.

"You hash got t'e pack-saddles mit te goolt ant papers dat my pard ant myselfs vas fint in t'e grave, mine friend," he said stepping out of the thicket again.

"It is gold intrusted to my care," sullenly said the Danite.

"Vell, you ish lose him now."

"What! do you intend to rob me?"

"No, I takes vat I vants all t'e same, ant I vants it all."

"Curse you, Jew."

"Don't do dot."

"Hear me!" and the man's face brightened at some sudden thought.

"Vell?"

"There is a great deal of gold there!"

"I sees him."

"I will give you half of it, if you will release me, and together we will leave this land."

"Mine friend, I have come here to stay, ant vat for you gives me half, ven I hash got all ter goolt!

"No, I ish got ter goolt, t'e papers, ant t'e mans," and Buckskin Moses laughed as though he enjoyed the situation immensely.

"What do you intend to do with me, Jew?"

"You ish a Danite, don't you?"

"Yes."

"You hash t'e rank of a sub-officer!"

"I am an under-officer."

"Vell, I knows dat you hash put up a leetle game to run off mit dis goolt, ant now you hash comed back here for it."

"Vell, if t'e chief knows vat you vas do, he vill hang you pooty quick, don't he?"

"I did not do anything wrong."

"Vell, I vill knows dat pooty quick, for I goes to t'e city."

"To Salt Lake?"

"Yesh, my friend."

"They will string you up, sure."

"Vell I don't know 'boud dat."

"They will do so, for these are troublos times, and they'll think you are a spy."

"Vell I vas, maype."

"You'll hang, sure, so you better dust out of this with me, and share the gold."

"I don't know apoud dat."

"I vill go to Salt Lake Ceety, mine friend, and I vill go ash von Danite."

The Danite, in spite of his peril, laughed at this, while he said roughly:

"A healthy Danite you'd make."

"I ish in petter he'l' now as you vas, for you ish might die pooty quick," and the Jew touched his pistol, a circumstance that at once drove the levity from the Danite's face.

"Well, what do you intend to do with me, for precious time is being wasted," he asked in a sullen tone.

"I was in a burry mineself; but I tells you vat I do."

"Well, out with it, Jew."

"Maype you don't like him, ven you hear him."

"Let me hear."

"Vell, I make a leetle pizziness mit you."

"For God's sake tell me!"

"Vell, you ish tell me t'e signs of t'e Danites, t'e passwords, give me t'e hand-grips, ant den I vill let you go, ven I comes pack all right, ant give you two of t'e goolt pags, mit t'e goolt in them."

"You are a fool!"

"Vell, don't I knows it, put you ish another one bigger as I."

"Do you expect me to betray the Danites' signs and signals to you?"

"Yesh."

"You don't know me, man."

"Vell, den ve get t'e petter acquainted, for I takes you mit me."

"Where?"

"To Salt Lake Ceety."

"Bab! you dare not go there."

"Vell, you vill see."

"I vill take t'e goolt, ant t'e papers, and I vill tell Mynheer Brigham Youngs, dat I catch you running off mit 'em, ant be vill be so tickle as never vas ant make me a prophet mit t'e Mormons."

"Do you mean this, Jew?" and the Danite turned livid.

"I does, so help me Moses, and dat ish myself, for I ish name Moses."

"And, if I give you the signs and grips, you will let me go free, give me my horse, and half the gold!"

"I was not one tam fool dat I looks, mine friend."

"I has sense, ant I has told you dat I gives you two pags goolt, ant you can have von horse, too."

"Well, I will accept your terms."

"Dat ish goot, ant soon ash I fint me out dat you don't tell me von tam lie, I vill let you go."

"What! do you intend to detain me until you find out if I tell you right?"

"Yesh, I vill take you mit some frients o' mine, ant leave you, until I tries mit t'e signs."

"If I gits kilt, den you gits kilt py mine frients."

"If I coomes pack, den you goes mit t'e goolt."

The Danite groaned at this, but he was in the Jew's power, as well he knew, and could offer no word or act in resistance.

"Curse you, Jew, you have me at your mercy," hissed the Danite.

"Dat ish so," was the laconic response.

"Well, I accept your terms, so let us have the ordeal over with."

The Jew made no reply, but stood in an attitude of listening.

Then he said, quickly:

"Get in t'e cave pooty quick, for somepody vas coom."

"Release my hands and I will aid you to stand 'em off," cried the Danite.

"Vell, I was not such a fool."

"Git into t'e cave, ant I does t'e fighting fer us both."

The Danite dared not disobey, and disappeared in the thicket, Buckskin Moses following him, just as two horsemen appeared in sight, coming up the narrow ledge toward the cavern.

Coming upon the horse of the dead Danite, they halted, as though for consultation, and then came on slowly up the hill.

That they were Danites their dress and masks indicated, and yet Buckskin Moses did not seem to be in the least disturbed by their approach.

CHAPTER XXXIII.

THE ENCOUNTER AT THE CAVERN.

THAT the two persons who were coming up the ledge recognized the horse which they came upon as one belonging to the Danite band, there seemed no doubt, for they came on with more assurance than before, as though they did not anticipate meeting a foe.

As they turned a bend in the rocky trail,

and came upon the pack-horse, and the animal ridden by Leo, the Danite, whom the Jew then had as a prisoner in the cavern, they came to a halt.

But again seeming to recognize the horse of the Danite as one they knew well, they once more came forward, riding almost up to the thicket of pines.

As they came to a halt they started suddenly at seeing an unexpected personage step out of the thicket and confront them.

They had anticipated seeing a Danite appear, but instead it was Buckskin Moses, and he had them covered, in spite of their being on their guard, as they thought, against surprise.

"Shentilmens, it ish petter ash you don't move, or you dies pooty quick!"

There was something most ludicrous in the words, and even more so in the appearance of the speaker, and the two Danites burst out into rude laughter.

"It was funny, don't it? Vell, dat was funny, too."

With the last word the Jew sent a bullet from each revolver through the bats of the Danites, and the startled horses wheeled so suddenly as nearly to unseat their riders.

Believing that Buckskin Moses had intended to kill them, and not daring to risk a run of it down the steep ledge, the now thoroughly alarmed Danites wheeled their horses back toward the thicket, at the same time drawing their revolvers and opening fire.

Buckskin Moses had simply desired to check the rude laughter, and had not expected to precipitate an encounter as he did.

But seeing that the two men were determined to fight it out, he stood his ground unflinchingly, and the ring of his weapons was in chorus with the rattle of theirs.

Perhaps half a dozen shots were exchanged in as many seconds, and with a result that was in favor of the Jew, for he stood unharmed in his tracks while one Danite lay dead at his feet and the other dying.

"Well, Moses, starting a graveyard all to yourself?"

Buckskin Moses started as the cheery voice broke upon his ear, and beheld, just turning a bend of the cliff none other than his old traveling-companion Dave Harrington, while just behind him came Lieutenant Eugene Crichton.

"Oh! it was you, Tave, was it?" said Buckskin Moses, in his inimitably cool way.

"Yes, it was me and Lieutenant Crichton, and we are on your trail."

"How you vas?" said Moses to the lieutenant, who replied:

"Oh, we are all right, Buckskin Moses, and we are glad to see that you are able to take care of yourself, for I see three dead Danites here which you have evidently just slain."

"Oh, I was a terror, shentilmans, ven I gets my back up."

"Yesh, I joost kilt them two Danites, ant that oder von vas my game a leetle vile ago, ant den dere ish another von vat vas all alive, only I has got him fast in t'e caverns."

An investigation by Daring Dave quickly convinced the new-comers that Buckskin Moses had told the truth, and the young courier was delighted to find that the gold bags and papers had been captured.

"I vas glat you vas coom, Tave, for I wants a leetle talk all py myself mit te Danites shentilmans, ant den I wants you to keep him until I cooms back."

"If I don't cooms back, den kill him right avay quick."

"Does you hear vat I say, Danites?" and he turned to the sullen captive.

"Yes."

"Vell, ven I cooms back, t'e shentilmans vill be allowed to go, ant I gives him two pags of goolt."

"If I don't returns any more, den you vas to kill him."

"It shall be as you say, Moses; but where are you going?" asked Dave.

"I was going somewhere."

And more Buckskin Moses would not say; but he asked the young officer to await him there with Dave for a few days, perhaps a week, and keep the Danite a prisoner until his return.

Convinced now that the Jew was no spy, after his encounter with the Danites, and assured that he was bound upon some secret service, which he hinted would pan out well for the lieutenant as well as himself, Eugene

Crichton consented to remain at the cavern with Daring Dave, and securely guard the prisoner.

"We will head old Jim Bridger off as he goes by, lieutenant, and then we will be a team to stand any Danites off that may come along," said Dave, and, while the young courier went to hunt up the old scout, the lieutenant set to work to make the place as comfortable as he could for their stay there.

In the mean time Buckskin Moses led the Danite one side, and had a long and earnest talk with him.

Now and then the lieutenant saw the Jew write something down on a piece of paper, and then read it over to the Danite.

After this Buckskin Moses entered the cabin and, opening the iron and tin boxes, took out the papers and bidding the lieutenant not to allow the Danite to escape, started upon his way.

"One week you say, Moses?" called out the lieutenant.

"Yesh, von week I does not coom pack, joost kill t'e Danites, for he vill pe a traitors vat gets me into troubles."

"I'll see that you are avenged, Moses," returned Eugene Crichton.

"Dat vas goot," and Buckskin Moses trudged on his way, and soon disappeared from sight.

Soon after Daring Dave came up the ledge, accompanied by Jim Bridger, the scout, whom he had luckily met on the trail as he was about to turn up the gorge where the Jew had gone into camp.

As they joined Eugene Crichton the latter said:

"Dave, I have a little plan of my own on hand, and I am convinced that your Jew friend can help me carry it out, so you remain here with Bridger, and look after the prisoner and the horses, while I go with Moses.

"If he aids me well and good; but if not I shall return at once."

So saying, Eugene Crichton started on after the Jew, leaving the old scout and Daring Dave in charge of the cavern, the prisoner, and the horses of the Danites.

CHAPTER XXXIV.

A PERILOUS UNDERTAKING.

WHEN Eugene Crichton left the cavern on the ledge, he wended his way down the hillside to where his horse and the one belonging to Daring Dave had been left when they went up the mountain trail.

Mounting his own animal, a superb black, and leaving Dave's horse for his master to come after, he rode rapidly down to the gorge where he and the courier had discovered the Jew's night encampment.

Buckskin Moses was just ready to start, and looked up in surprise when he beheld the lieutenant riding up.

"Moses, I have come after you for a particular reason," said the lieutenant, dismounting and approaching the Jew.

"Vell, vat vas t'e reason dat vas so particular, looten't?" asked the Jew.

"I am convinced that you are not what you seem, or would appear."

"I was Moses Mordecai from Baltimore, an' vat Vane calls Buckskin Moses t'e Jew scout."

"You may be Moses Mordecai; but that you have come out here to sell goods, and are now risking your life to go to the Mormon camp, I do not believe."

"Vell, vat I goes for, if it don't pe for bizziness?"

"That question I cannot answer; but I will say that whatever your motive, I have one equally as strong for desiring to go into the Mormon lines, and I wish to accompany you."

"A poor Jew peddler can goes vere a shentilmens soldiers vill get kilt."

"I'll risk it, for I believe you have it in your power to protect me."

"How I get t'e powers?"

"At first I feared you were playing a part for the Mormons; but now I know you to be true, and more, that you have the pluck to face any danger, in spite of your assumed timidity."

"Miss Leroy, the niece of my colonel, is in the power of the Danites, and I confess to you that I am engaged to her, and that I love her with all my heart."

"What may be her fate, God only knows, if she is not rescued soon."

"You are going into the Mormon lines, and I ask to go with you, my friend."

Buckskin Moses seemed touched by the words and manner of the young officer, but said:

"How vas you go, mine frient?"

"I saw your long talk with the Danite you captured, and I overheard your terms with him, so I know that you forced from him all the secret signs of the Danites, and intend to use them for your own protection and service."

"Now, I am willing, if you will only initiate me into the mysteries, to go as a Danite, for I can return to the cavern and rig up in the clothing of one of those you killed."

"Vell, dat ish goot, put it takes plenty of vat you calls pluck."

"I will take the chances."

"Oh! you ish prave; but supposh dat ter tam Danites tell me all wrong."

"Well, both you and I must take the risks on that, and unless a large force halts us, woe be unto them."

"Vell, dat ish goot moosic to sing, and I perlieves dat it vill pe all rights, ant I dinks I let you go mit me."

"I thank you, Moses, from my heart," and the young officer grasped the hand of the Jew, who said quietly:

"Don't you vas t'ank me untils ve get out mit t'e fires."

"But ve goes togeder, mine frient, ish dat not so?"

"Yes, and I will hasten back to the cavern and get one of those dead Danites' suits to put on."

As he was turning away Buckskin Moses called out:

"Don't pe in a hurry, mine goot frient, for I has t'e Danites' clot'in' here."

"You have?"

"Yesh."

"You surely have not Danite clothing in your pack to sell?"

"No, but I vas have two suits of clot'es, dat I borrow from t'e Danites shentilmens dot Tave ant myself kilt mit t'e grave."

"Ah, yes, and you think they will do, Moses?"

"Vel, I dinks t'ey ish goot, ant I hash dish leetle t'ings vat Brigham Youngs put around t'e necks o' t'e Danites, ant it ish goot to push him all around."

"Now let me told you vat you wants to know."

Buckskin Moses then took out the piece of paper which Eugene Crichton had seen him making notes upon when he was talking with the Danite, and taught the young officer all the secret symbols which he had learned from his prisoner.

"Now here ish t'e clothe's," and he took a suit of Danite clothing from his pack, and Eugene Crichton was soon rigged out in the sable attire, while upon his face was the red mask, and his hands were incased in the crimson gauntlets.

"Now we vill go, mine frient, ant remember you ish a Danite," and remounting their horses, the two set forth together upon their most perilous undertaking, the Jew's patient mule following upon their heels, and caring little whether he served Jew, Gentile or Mormon.

CHAPTER XXXV.

THE DANITE CHIEF'S BLACK TRAIL.

The fact that he was watched by the Prophet made Major Jack De Lee go with caution.

Before he had started for the East he had the full confidence of his chief, and was given unlimited powers; but he had kept very silent upon the reasons of his Eastern trip, and with envious enemies, ever ready to sow the seed of discord, he found that Brigham Young had changed toward him.

Not that he openly showed any change, but secretly he was watching the major through his spies.

It having been whispered that there was a woman in the case, it naturally arose in the mind of the head Mormon, why was the Danite officer playing a secret part regarding her, unless it was from fear of his Prophet?

With the full knowledge that he was under espionage, Major De Lee yet went about his duties as though wholly unconscious of the fact.

His having caught one of the known secret spies of the Prophet upon his track, and who

had trailed him to the Bird-cage in the mountains where he had so long kept Flo, his young wife, hidden, convinced him that he must be most cautious.

"I will not trust any man to dispose of that spy's body, but do it myself," he said, as he rode away from the cabin, after his interview with Louise Leroy.

That interview had turned out differently from what he had hoped.

A man of superb presence, of winning manners, and fascinations of an uncommon order, he had found few women whose hearts he could not touch.

As the young step-brother of Colonel Lewellyn, it will be remembered that he had met and loved Louise Leroy, then a mere child.

He had been thrown much with her, and had he been different, as she grew in years, there is little doubt but that he would have won her heart.

But his was a nature naturally inclined to the bad, and his wild ways soon warped him from all good, and even his love for Louise could not check him in his downward course.

His wild escapades soon terminated in an affair that sent him flying for his life to the wilds of the West, and soon it became whispered about that he was dead.

Better would it have been had he met with his death as reported, than to have cast his lot as he had done with the Mormons, and become one of the most bitter of the Danite band, and the most cruel, thereby making himself greatly feared.

Having gotten a large fortune by his marriage with his first wife, a young lady of Baltimore, whom he had deceived as he had poor Flo, the greed of gold seized upon him, and he sought to enrich himself by just such alliances again, and a cruel fate led him to the village where he rescued the maiden from the ice, to win her love and cruelly deceive her.

With no real reason for his acts, other than that he wished to keep his wives out of the sight of the Prophet and all else, he acted secretly, and he had been wedded to his first wife for long months before it was known that he was married.

Then her death followed, from some unknown cause, and Flo became the next victim.

It was to get all of Flo's property converted into money that he had gone East, so he told her; but he had also another motive which he kept from her.

That motive was the abducting of Louise Leroy.

Knowing that her uncle, his step-brother, was out in Wyoming with his regiment, and that her lover, Lieutenant Eugene Crichton was with him, he concocted his plans to get possession of her.

He got from the post some of the official paper, and, an accomplished penman imitated the writing of both Colonel Lewellyn and Lieutenant Crichton, and wrote letters to her, which the reader has seen wholly deceived her.

The mails were very infrequent then, from that far post, and lying in wait with some of his Danite band, he captured the courier and took from him the letter-bag, in which, as he had expected, he found letters from the uncle and lover to Louise.

These he broke open, read, and destroyed, so that they should not conflict with those he had to deliver, and then he betook himself eastward with all dispatch.

To transfer valuable real estate into money was but short work, armed as he was from Flo, with power of attorney, and this done he set about the devilish work of kidnapping poor Louise.

She thought him dead until she received a letter from him, saying that he yet lived, had reformed, joined the army, and would soon visit her with letters from her uncle and Lieutenant Crichton, who had deputized him to act as her escort to the West.

Of course the unsuspecting girl fell into the trap, and, through the devilish ingenuity of the wicked man had been safely taken to the cabin in the Mormon hills, with a result which is known.

But Louise Leroy was no timid-hearted maiden, and she defied the man though she knew she was wholly in his power.

Could he force her to become his wife, her property he knew, being in her own right, he would get possession of, as he had that of his first wife and Flo.

And more, he really loved, as much as his selfish heart was capable of loving, the lovely girl.

She was the one love of his life, and he was determined that she should become his wife, even if he had to put Flo out of the way to make her such.

Finding that the two were known to each other, having been schoolmates together, he dared not let them meet, so Flo was taken to Salt Lake City, while Louise was kept a prisoner in the mountains.

Leaving the cabin, after being defied by Louise Leroy, Major De Lee went the rounds of his lines, saw that every outpost was doing its duty, and the camps ready to meet an attack at a moment's notice.

Then, as it was sunset, he returned by the cabin, sought the boulder where he had killed the spy, and found him lying just as he had left him.

"I am glad old Batty has not found him," he muttered, as he raised the body in his strong arms and bore it to his horse.

Throwing it across the back of his animal, he mounted and rode away, seeking a pitfall which he knew of in the mountains, and hurling into its dark depths the man he had slain.

Relieved of his load, the horse was then urged swiftly on toward the city, and an hour after Major De Lee dismounted at the house of the Prophet and made his report in person, that he had visited every outpost.

"You have done a hard day's work, De Lee, and you deserve credit for it.

"By the way, I called upon your wife today, and I found her a most beautiful and charming person.

"As she is a stranger in our midst I wished her to feel that she was among friends.

"You are to be envied, De Lee, the possession of so lovely a bride."

The Prophet spoke indifferently, but he had his eyes upon the major's face, reading the effect of his words.

But no sign betrayed that Jack De Lee was displeased at the Prophet's visit to his home, and he departed in the most cheerful humor.

Going to his own house, he was met by Flo, who had kept supper waiting for him, as he told her he would return late.

She told him of the visit made her, said she had found the Prophet a most charming man, and that after all Mormonism might not be so terrible a thing to believe in.

De Lee eyed her closely, to note if she was sincere, and yet could see no reason to doubt that she was.

"Where is Louise Leroy, Jack?" she asked, after a while.

He started at the question, but she seemed not to notice it, and he answered:

"Flo, for your sake I have sent her back to her friends."

"Bless you, Jack, for those words, for loving you as I do, I cared not to share that love with another, and especially with one whom I regard as I do Louise."

"And then, poor girl, I fear it would break her heart to be deceived in you, for she must love you now, believing you to be different from what you are."

"I am so glad, Jack."

"I did it for your sake, Flo," he repeated.

"And sent her to her uncle, whom you said was with the army near?"

"Yes, she left under an escort the first thing this morning, after I arrived in the mountains."

"She was there then?"

"Yes," and seemingly fretted at her questions, he changed the subject abruptly, for in spite of his life of deception Jack De Lee could not deliberately lie without blushing.

CHAPTER XXXVI.

LOUISE LEROY'S VISITOR.

WHAT would be her fate Louise Leroy could not conjecture.

She had been threatened with a living death by Jack De Lee if she refused to become his wife.

She had been told that she would be forced to marry some Mormon with half a dozen wives, all of whom would tyrannize over her, while if she became Mrs. De Lee she would be happy, for loving her as he did, he would do all in his power to make her life one of contentment.

He told her that he had sinned to get her into his power, and that his idolatrous love for her was his only excuse for so doing, and he begged to be forgiven for sweet love's sake.

Louise had listened, and through all had been cold and defiant.

When the Danite chief left her, her courage gave way and she burst into a torrent of bitter tears.

"I will die before I am sacrificed!" she said, firmly.

"But Eugene knows that I am a captive to the Mormons, for I heard him call my name; and he will rescue me, and my dear uncle will not let them keep me here, I know."

"I will not give up hope, for I feel all must come right; no matter how dark the skies are now, there is a silver lining upon the horizon for me."

Having thus buoyed herself up with hope she became more cheerful, and throwing upon her shoulders a light shawl, she strolled out of doors.

She saw that her every movement was closely watched by both old Batty and his wife, and knew how impossible it was for her to attempt to escape.

"If I had a good horse I believe I could reach our lines after nightfall," she said.

Then it struck her as a good idea to attempt to bribe old Batty or his wife, and perhaps both, so she called to the old man, who was near.

"Well, miss?" he said with respect.

"Are you a Mormon, Batty?"

"Yes, miss, I be."

"But you have only one wife, I believe?"

"Yes, miss, fer I hain't rich ter take keer of no more, an' wives is awful expensive critters."

"Then you are poor?"

"Awful poor, miss."

"I suppose you wouldn't object to being rich?"

"Lordy! no, miss, I'd like it."

"Doubtless; but what would you consider enough to make you rich?"

"Well, miss, if I had a nice little farm, and it paid for, with a home comfortably furnished, some cattle and a couple of horses, and just enough in the bank for a rainy day, I'd think I were a rich man."

"All of which would amount to only about ten thousand dollars."

"Yes, miss."

"Well, Batty, I can tell you how you can make that sum."

"For Lordy's sake how, miss?"

"I will give it to you."

"You?"

"Yes, Batty, I will give you ten thousand dollars, if you will do as I ask you."

"What is that, miss?"

"How many horses are there in yonder log stable?"

"Three, miss."

"Just the right number for our use, and I want you and your wife to start with me tonight for the lines of the United States army, and once there you are safe, and I will see that you have a nice farm, cattle and furniture, and a few thousand in bank, while, as security, I will turn over to you my diamonds which I have with me, and which cost double the sum you wish to make you rich."

"I cannot do it, miss, much as I'd like to."

"Why can you not?"

"Why, miss, the Danites would track me to the end of the earth, and kill both old Bess and myself."

"It are a dream, miss, a dream o' hope and joy fer me, but ther waking up would prove it were a nightmare."

"No, miss, no; much as I pity you, and would like to serve you, even for your own sake and not the money, neither Bess or myself would do it for ten times ten thousand dollars, for we knows what Danites be and we has had reason to know that nobody is safe as betrays them."

Louise Leroy was a good reader of human nature, and she saw at once that the man's superstitious horror of his own people would prevent bribery, and that no sum could move him.

He loved gold, but he loved life more.

But she was determined to try the wife, and asked him to call old Bess.

Batty did so, and then Louise repeated her tempting offer, and with the same result, for the old woman trembled with terror at the

thought of listening to temptation for an instant.

Foiled, Louise felt that she must seek escape through some other channel, and asked if they knew of any Danite of the band that could be bribed.

Indeed they did not, and if they did, it would be their duty to at once inform their chief.

In asking them about Major De Lee, she discovered how well trained they were, for, though she saw traces that the cabin had had a fair occupant before she came, neither Batty nor his wife seemed to know that such had been the case, and said that the cabin had been built for the major's own pleasure, when he wanted a few days' rest to himself.

Still, with every obstacle against her escape, Louise did not despair, and that night sat by her window gazing out upon the starlit night and thinking and plotting.

Suddenly she beheld a horseman appear in full view, and, watching him, saw him ride a short distance up the mountain side.

The starlight showed her that he halted, dismounted and raised something to the back of his horse.

Then he sprung into his saddle and moved slowly away.

But as he passed near the cabin she recognized the form of Major De Lee.

"What can he want here?" she murmured.

"And what was it that he carried away with him?"

She soon after retired, but early in the morning was up and wending her steps toward the spot where she had seen the major halt and dismount.

Batty was watching her, but pretending to gather wild flowers, she strolled along until she came to the boulder.

Then she started, for she saw the grass pressed down, as though some heavy object had lain there, and, worse still, there was a large pool of blood there.

"It was either a dead body or a wounded man he bore away."

"Ah! I remember the shot I heard while he was here in the morning, and Batty told me the major had fired at a bird."

"The shot was at a human being, I now feel convinced, and he came back last night to remove the body."

"I shall accuse him of it, and mark well his face."

Listlessly she passed the forenoon, trying to read, trying to play upon a guitar she found in the cabin, but with no pleasure in aught she did.

Always the lynx eyes of the old Mormon and his wife were upon her, until she grew nervous under their gaze.

After dinner she threw herself into a hammock swung between two trees, for a siesta, for she had really enjoyed the meal, old Bess being an adept at the culinary art.

By degrees she lost consciousness in sleep, and awoke with a start, as a sound near by fell upon her ears.

She sprung from the hammock, to find a horseman near, talking with Batty.

"I have come from the chief to see the lady under your charge," she heard the horseman say.

"She is there, sir, and I will tell her," answered Batty, who seeing that she was awake, called out:

"A messenger from the major, miss."

Louise saw a man of slender form, clad in deep black, and wearing the red mask and gloves which indicated his belonging to De Lee's secret league of Danites.

He sprung from the saddle as he saw her, fastening his horse to a tree, and advancing toward her said politely:

"I have a letter for you, Miss Leroy."

He held forth the letter as he spoke, but continued:

"If you will accompany me to that seat, I will explain the letter, if you do not understand it."

There was something about the man that seemed to show her he wished to get out of earshot of Batty, and she quietly walked to the rustic seat, a few rods from the house, and which had been Flo's favorite retreat.

"Be seated, miss, and show no surprise as you read the letter, for Batty's eyes are upon you."

"Here are two letters, one written by Major De Lee, the other by another person, whose name you will recognize."

"Read the former letter first, please."

Louise gazed fixedly upon the masked face, but could not penetrate the shield, and, while her heart throbbed with a sudden hope, she broke the heavy Danite seal, and read:

"HOME.

"MY DEAR LOUISE:—
"I send you a line by messenger, to say that I will be too busy for the next few days to see you, and receive your reply, as to what fate you will accept."

"That is, whether you will become my wife, or be sacrificed to another."

"It lies in your power to decide your own destiny, as to whether you will live with one who loves you, and lives for you alone, or meet a doom than which death were far preferable."

"I love you, Louise, and I beg you to cling to me."

"One week from to-day I call for your answer, and Heaven grant that it be that you will accept the alternative, for I will devote my life to your happiness."

"Yours, hoping and waiting,

"DE LEE."

A look of scorn passed over the face of Louise Leroy as she read this letter, and the messenger stood the while attentively regarding her.

"Now the other, miss, and you will see that it has not the Danite seal, and is from a friend."

"A friend?"

"Yes, miss."

"Ah! I have no friends in this hated land of Mormons," sighed the maiden.

"Perhaps you have, miss."

"The letter will tell you, only show no sign, if you get good tidings in it."

"You give me hope, sir."

"Is that hepe to be blasted?" eagerly said Louise.

"The letter will tell," was the quiet answer.

She attempted to open the letter, but her hand trembled, and she waited an instant to gain command over herself, for he said warningly, and in a low earnest tone:

"For God's sake be calm, for that old man is the veriest slave of Major De Lee, and did he suspect wrong, he would give the signal to the Danite camps upon the hills above, and your life and mine would be the sacrifice."

"Then you are indeed my friend, for your words tell me so, and I will show no foolish weakness," and with a mighty effort Louise controlled herself, and with a firm hand opened the second letter, and doing so in a way that deceived old Batty as to its being a second epistle, for, since the offer she had made him, the old guard had become doubly watchful over her every movement, well knowing that she had it in her heart to escape.

CHAPTER XXXVII.

A MESSENGER OF GLAD TIDINGS.

WHEN the eyes of Louise Leroy fell upon the writing, in the letter before her, she saw that it was written in a familiar hand.

Yet who the writer was she could not then recall, though she knew that often before she had seen the writing.

She did not betray any sign at this discovery, and glanced up at the messenger, who stood a short distance from her, leaning against a tree, his arms folded upon his breast, and his eyes gazing directly upon her, through the holes in his crimson mask.

With another effort at self-control, she began the reading of the letter, and which was as follows:

"SALT LAKE CITY.

"August 10th, 1857.

"Do not start, my dear Louise, when you see this familiar writing from an old friend, for I write, as there is no chance to see you and talk with you."

"Do you recall our days at Madam Dana's school in dear old Boston—"

"It is from my dear old room-mate, Flora," said Louise in an undertone, and eagerly she went on reading the letter:

"Those days I can never forget, though now my life is sadly changed since then, for now I am away out here in Mormon-land."

"What can Flora be doing here?" said Louise musingly.

"The letter may explain," suggested the messenger, overbearing the remark.

Again she continued reading:

"Yes, I am here in this wild land, and, worse than all I am a Mormon wife, Louise.

"Do not shrink from me in horror at my confession, for I was wooed and won by a man I believed the soul of honor."

"He saved my life one day, when I broke through

the ice while skating, and from that moment I loved him.

"All other suitors, all other friends were cast aside for him, and I came with him."

"I believed that he was an officer of the army of the United States, and I came to his mountain home, the same cabin where you are now a prisoner, and there lived for long months, ay for a year, happy in his love."

"But the mist drifted away from before my life, and his own words told me who and what he was."

"Told me that he was a Mormon, a Danite chief, and that I was his second wife, his other victim, for victim she must have been, having died before he met me."

"Then, Louise, I hated him even more than I had loved him, and especially the more, when I learned from him that I was not to be his only wife, for that the Prophet commanded him to take another."

"He had been East and, under my own signatures, secured all of my property in gold, and then told me that he had been robbed of it by United States soldiers who attacked him."

"This left me poor and friendless, for he is my foe now; but I swore revenge against him, and I played well my part."

"He told me to go with him to his home in Salt Lake City, and I did so."

"He swore that he loved me alone, and would live for me alone."

"But he had told me that his other wife that was to be, was none other than you, my poor dear Louise."

"Ah me! that he should intend to drag you into the depths as he has me."

"Pretending to trust him, I came to the Mormon city with him, and now I know that it was but to leave the mountain cabin for you."

"Feeling that he has deceived me, although he told me but this morning that he had returned you to your uncle in the United States army, I determined to know the truth."

"I saw him write a letter, and call to a servant to send it by a Danite messenger to the mountains."

"Then he departed, and I saw that the letter was addressed to you."

"I called to the servant, told him I would call a messenger, and send the letter."

"Then I secretly robed myself in the Danite uniform, mounted a horse he had given me, and I am before you now in disguise, and I bid you hope, for I will save you."

FLORA."

The letter dropped from the hand of Louise Leroy, and stooping quickly the disguised Flora picked it up and handed it to her, while she said warningly:

"Be calm, Louise, and all will be well."

"I return to the city now, but expect each night to have me come for you, and I will lay my plans so well there will be no mistake, and together we will fly from this hated man and his hated people."

Then saluting politely the supposed Danite turned, mounted his horse and rode away, leaving Louise Leroy almost dazed by all that had occurred.

CHAPTER XXXVIII.

FACING THE ODDS.

BOTH Buckskin Moses and Eugene Crichton fully understood the peril they were entering upon in going into the Mormon lines.

Of course the Jew had the least danger to run, for he had the wares to help out his story, and the fact that he knew he would realize largely upon them, as the things were just such as the Mormons would wish at that time, while communication was cut off with outside trade, and everything in the pack of Buckskin Moses seemed to have been selected with an eye to just what was desirable.

Had he been alone, he might pass without trouble in and out of the Mormon city; but in taking the young officer with him he knew that the chances were greatly against him, for, if Crichton was discovered to be a spy, he might be the sufferer from having been caught in bad company.

Still he did not shrink from the greater risk, and, as the two went along together they practiced the signs, signals and symbols, which Leo Fane the Danite had given to the Jew as correct.

Buckskin Moses had also generously given to the young officer the symbol of protection, hung about his neck by Brigham Young, telling him that in case they separated, he would need its protection, and added:

"My pack will protect me pooty sure."

Eugene Crichton took the symbol, but under protest, and the two continued on their way until they met the first danger.

"Dere ish a sentinel," said Buckskin Moses, pointing to a horseman who was not far distant, having just ridden over the hilltop.

"Yes, and he is a Danite."

"Now I will try the virtue of our signs and passwords, and if I find they are wrong, yonder Danite will be cut off suddenly in his usefulness," was the cool reply of the dragoon officer.

"Vell, den, you runs fer it like t'e tuyvil, ant I vil 'no' notings about you, if dere pes blenty mores."

"Put if dere pes only a few of t'e Danites, den ve kin kilt 'em pooty quick."

"You don't seem to be very scary, Buckskin Moses," said the lieutenant.

"Vell, I don't vas so scary as I looks, maybe."

The Danite, now visible, barring the trail ahead, was without doubt a sentinel.

He was well-mounted and well-armed, and had his Mississippi *yager* lying across his saddle-bow ready for instant use.

Of course the appearance of the Danite with the Jew would indicate that no enemies were approaching; but still he did not appear to be a man to trust wholly in appearances, and was not to be caught napping.

"Halt!"

The command of the Danite sentinel was promptly obeyed, and instantly Eugene Crichton made a signal with his right hand. It seemed to be understood by the Danite, for he called out:

"Advance, Nauvoo!"

"Nauvoo advances!" was the prompt response, and the guard then pointed his rifle up in the air.

Taking his own weapon, a Colt's repeating rifle, Eugene Crichton pointed its muzzle toward the earth, and the guard sung out as though satisfied:

"Ay, ay, come on!"

"Nauvoo advances," said the dragoon, and he beckoned to the Jew to come on, for, in going through these maneuvers he had ridden in alone, halting within a few yards of the Danite sentinel, and both had spoken in a low tone, which did not reach the ears of Buckskin Moses.

"Vel, it is pooty goot so far," said Moses, as he rode up to the side of the officer.

"Yes, the prisoner told you right, and so far all is well," and then addressing the sentinel, Eugene Crichton continued:

"Well, comrade, I have picked up a Jew peddler, and he is on his way to the city."

"He had better not go through the Danite camps, or devil a dollar will he ever get for his pack," said the other.

"Oh, yes, he will, for he has a symbol of protection from the Prophet, who allowed him to go off to buy wares and bring them in."

"Then he hints that he has news from Johnson's army up toward Fort Bridger."

"Ah! then I guess you are not the greeny you look, Jew."

"I vas pooty green," was the laconic response.

"Self-praise is half scandal, they say, Jew," laughed the Danite.

"Vas dat so?"

"Yes; but to which band do you belong, pard?" and the Danite turned to Eugene Crichton, who said, indifferently:

"I do not get your meaning, comrade."

"Are you of the Black Band, under Major De Lee, or from the Red Band of Captain Floriett?"

"Ah! I understand you now."

"I belong to Major De Lee's band."

"I see that you do not wear your rosette, so I could not tell."

The quick eye of the officer caught sight of a small, red rosette upon the breast of the Danite guard, and he said, as he put his hand upon the spot where he felt he should have one:

"I must have dropped my rosette, for I see that it is gone; but come, Jew, let us go on."

"You won't open your wares here, Jew, will you, so the boys up in the camp over yonder can have a look?" asked the Danite.

"No, mine frient, I vas just go to see t'e Prophet, Prigham Yoongs."

"Yes, the big-bugs get the choice in this world's goods," sighed the Danite, as the two friends rode on.

"Vel, loot'nent, I vas forgot apout dat tam rosette; but I has von here in my pack," said the Jew, drawing out a small sable rosette and banding it to the young dragoon, who at once pinned it upon his breast with the remark:

"Well, Moses, we passed through that ordeal all right."

"Dat vas so, put ve ish not out mit t'e woods yet—Holy Isaacs! look vot cooms!"

The dragoon saw what was coming, and it was by no means a pleasant sight, for along the trail came at a canter a spirited steed, and upon his back was a rider, whom even at that

distance Eugene Crichton recognized as the Danite leader.

Behind him, riding by twos, were a score of Danite horsemen, and to escape them there was no chance whatever, and both Buckskin Moses and the dragoon knew that they must face the consequences.

But neither winced at the danger, and only set their lips firmly to meet the result, bring it what it might to them, life or death.

CHAPTER XXXIX.

IN LUCK.

UPON discovering the supposed Danite and his strange companion, Major Jack De Lee drew rein and eyed them through his mask with a look which of course they could not comprehend the nature of, not being able to see his face.

"Well, sir, where are you going?" said the major, sternly, addressing the Danite.

"I am off duty, sir, from illness, and returning to the city camps," was the cool reply, and delivered with a presence of mind that made the Jew feel that he need not have any doubt of the nerve of his companion under circumstances most trying.

"And where did you pick that thing up?"

The remark of the major caused his Danite escort to laugh.

And no wonder, for Buckskin Moses was a most ludicrous-looking personage, especially taking his whole outfit together.

His horse, as I have said, was a hide of bones and seemed never to have been fat, but there was that about the animal which made him a most animated skeleton when occasion needed, for he had both speed and bottom.

His bones had been economized by the Jew to hang a net on, and to this were fastened various wares which rain and the dust of travel would not injure.

In fact the horse carried a very respectable tin store upon his back in addition to his master.

The master's get-up was peculiar and the worst for wear, while his physiognomy was most striking, his nose being almost a deformity in hook and size, and a pair of spectacles which rested upon it giving the idea that they held it in place.

His beard was short, unkempt, and his hair long and matted, while his face had two marked expressions, one a cunning leer, and the other a look of fright.

He was rather stout, of good size, and sat his horse with an ease which his pack-mule, in his tantrums, had been unable to disturb, although he had frequently hung back on the lariat suddenly, in a vain hope of dragging his master to *terra firma*.

The mule's pack was enormous, but did not in the least disturb his muleship, who trotted along under his load with an indifference born of a patient nature.

At the remark of the major as to who and what the Jew might be, Eugene Crichton laughed lightly, and said:

"That is something I picked up, sir, back on the trail, and he has letters for the Prophet, he says."

"Ha! say you so?"

"Give me the letter, my man!"

"Ish you Prigham Yoongs, for I can't see your face?"

"No, I am the Danite chief."

"Vell you don't vas t'e man dat I wants, for dese bapers ish for ter Prophet, Prigham Yoongs."

"But I will deliver them to him."

"Do you t'inks I vas a fools?"

"No, you don't look it; but who gave you the papers?"

"If you vas go mit me to de Prophet you will know all apout hims, put I don't give nods avay."

"Dat vas not pizziness, mine frient."

The major laughed, and said:

"Well, I have not time to go with you, but you can go on to the city and my soldier will show you the way—By the way, Jew, have you any attire for ladies in your pack?"

"Vell, I don't be such a fools ash to comes to a blace vere dere ish blenty wifes to one mans unt don't pring t'e nick-nacks for t'e vimmins."

"I gits my heat broke if I do."

"You understand the sex, I see; but I want

you to go by my cabin in the mountain -- you know where it is, soldier?"

"Yes, sir," promptly said Eugene Crichton, whom he addressed.

"And ask the lady," continued De Lee, "whom you will find there, if she wishes to purchase anything from you."

"If so, you pay him his price, my man, and give me the change when next I see you," and Major De Lee thrust a roll of bills into the hand of the dragoon, who answered:

"I will obey you, sir."

Without another word the Danite chief rode on, his men joking the Jew as they passed him, and then the dragoon and Buckskin Moses continued on their way, the latter remarking:

"Vell, dat vas luck ebery time, don't it?"

"Yes, Moses, we are in luck, and now we leave to find the cabin in the mountains, for I believe that there is the cage in which he has hidden away the one I seek."

"Come, let us press on, and in some way we must find the cabin."

"Ah! there comes another Danite."

"They are as thick as blackberries in these hills, and it is well I have not pushed on too far when out scouting with my company, or death or defeat would have followed."

"We'll learn from that fellow, Moses, just where the cabin is."

"Dot vas so; he's got von tongue, ant he must talk mit it," was the laconic response of the Jew.

The one they had descried was another sable-clad, red-masked and gloved horseman, mounted upon a black horse, and was coming along at a canter.

How to get from him the desired information, Eugene Crichton had not thought of, but to halt him was the first move, and circumstances must govern the rest.

But he must be made to tell, even if, as Buckskin Moses had hinted, the information had to be forced from him.

"Hello, pard, what has you got there?" sung out the Danite, drawing rein as he came nearer.

"A notion store on horseback," responded Eugene Crichton.

"Wal, it looks it, and that's the boss on the bone-rack, isn't it?" and he took a critical survey of Moses, who answered:

"Yesh, I vas t'e boss, ant I vas von Jew."

"You look it, pard, but where are you taking it?"

"The major passed him through the lines to the city, for he has papers of importance for the Prophet, and told me to show him by the way of the mountain cabin."

"Ah! by the Bird-cage, where ther Angel of the Mountains dwells, pard?"

"Yes."

"You is Nick Foster, hain't you?"

"Yes," said Eugene Crichton, and he added: "You are Leo Fane, are you not?"

"Nary, pard, and I don't know whar Leo is."

"I be Dan Sloan."

"Oh, yes, I know you now, Dan," and Eugene Crichton mentally flattered himself upon his having rapidly become a monumental liar.

"How far is the major ahead?" asked the Danite.

"About half a mile, Dan."

"Whew!"

"Why, you can soon overtake him."

"That is just what I don't want to do, for I am off duty, and was riding up to the camps to have a game of cards with the boys, and the chief don't like card-playing in the outposts in these ticklish times."

"Well, we can't blame him, Dan."

"No, Nick, we can't."

"Let me see you a minute, Dan," and the pretended Nick Foster motioned to the Danite to ride one side with him.

"Waal, what are it, Nick?"

"Does yer intend ter go through ther Jew's pack, and tumble him over Dizzy Falls?"

"No; but I have a little biz in the city, and, as it's worth considerable to me to go on, I'll give you a twenty to take the Jew on to the Bird-cage."

"I'll do it."

"Thankee, Dan; but mind you, don't come any funny business, for he carries dispatches for the Prophet, and he'll be looked after if he don't turn up."

"I'm glad you told me, for I thought of cutting his throat and going through his pack, and then saying his old bones of a crittur went ter pieces and tumbled over ther falls."

"That wouldn't go down, Dan; but go on now, as fast as you can."

"You mean as fast as his old cattle can, for I've got a lightning goer here, Nick."

"Yes, your horse is a good one, Dan," and then turning to the Jew, Eugene Crichton called out:

"Good-by, Moses, I've got Dan Sloan to see you to the Bird-cage and then on to the city, for I've got some business to look after."

"You may pay him what you promised me."

"Vell, dat ish all right."

"Good-py, and don't you forget it I vas in luck."

"Good-by," called out Eugene Crichton as he rode away, while the Danite and the Jew took a trail that just there branched off from the mountain road.

But, hardly had the two disappeared in the timber bordering the mountain side, when the dragoon officer turned his horse to the right-about and slowly followed them.

CHAPTER XI.

FLORA'S PLOT.

FOR a young and helpless woman, surrounded by a people whom she knew to be her foes, were she not believed to be of their creed, to plot the escape of herself and a captive maiden from a bondage worse than death, was a most hazardous undertaking, and could only be entertained by a heart and brain incapable of the emotions of fear.

A confiding, loving wife, Flora would have ever been to the man she loved, had she not found out how black was his heart, and how evil was his life.

It at once dawned upon her that she could hate even more passionately than she could love, and the more she thought of her wrongs, at the hands of Jack De Lee, the more she hated him.

It seemed, as she thought over the past, that she had really never loved him, but had been fascinated by him.

Having saved her life, he had at once won her heart; but she reasoned to herself:

"Were he the affinity of my life, I could never now hate him with the intensity I do."

Determined to leave him, she was also equally as determined to save poor Louise Leroy.

Having found him false, she did not believe a word he said to her, and only pretended to believe him to play her part the better.

When he had told her that Louise Leroy had returned to her friends, she had at once determined to see for herself as to the truth of his words.

Innocent as a child, as she had always been, he did not, when she professed forgiveness and happiness, doubt her, and she therefore held the advantage in the game to be played between them.

When he bade her good-by in the morning, saying he would not be back until late at night, she had listened, and heard him enter his library, and the scratching of his quill-pen reached her ears as she stood eavesdropping.

Then she overheard his command to the servant, to send the letter to the mountains by a Danite messenger, and instantly he had ridden away, she very coolly possessed herself of the letter, and breaking the seal, read its contents.

The Danite seal on the table of her husband again closed the letter as before, and then she sat down and wrote what the reader has seen Louise Leroy read.

The next thing was to win over a servant to her confidence, telling her that she wanted to go to ride and dared not go alone as a woman, but would put on a masquerade her husband had allowed her to wear, in accompanying him through the mountains.

This was really the case, and attired in the Danite attire, Flora mounted her horse, which had been brought round to the door for her, and dashed away.

Straight to the mountains she went, and having been taught the Danite signals, passed the guards without trouble, safely reached the little cabin, with a result already known.

Returning in safety to her home, and armed with the secret she held, Flora yet greeted her husband upon his return, with a show of marked attention.

"Jack, are you going to be away every day in this way?" she asked rather petulantly, as the two sat together after supper.

"Yes, Flo, my duties are such that I have to swing round the lines daily, for, since our brush with the United States troops, General Johnson may pounce down upon us at any time, and in fact, I believe the want of supplies alone prevents his moving his army against our noble Prophet."

"Well, why can't I ride on horseback here, as I did in the mountains?"

"No, no, Flo, you are too beautiful to trust out alone, for there would be a hundred sportsmen at once trying to insinuate my beautiful bird of the mountain."

"I might wear a vail, if I am too beautiful to be seen?" she said petulantly.

"No, that would make you look mysterious, and mystery is not tolerated here."

"Well, let me go in some disguise."

"As an old woman?"

"No, for an old woman would certainly attract attention, dashing about on horseback, and I cannot ride slow."

"Go as a boy, then," and the major laughed.

"I will go in the Danite suit you had made for me, and which you told me, before I knew really what you were, you and your soldiers wore to excite the superstitious horror of the Indians."

"Oh! Jack, how you have deceived me in the past."

"Well, you have forgiven me, Flo, for you said so."

"I will if you will let me ride about as a Danite."

"I can mount my horse in the stable, and all who see me will think I am only one of your men."

"All right, Flo, only do not venture out of the city."

"No, indeed, for the city is large enough for me, and you know I am timid."

"You showed a great deal of pluck the other day, when you held the pistol covering my heart, Flo."

"Don't speak of that, Jack, for it is past, and let the past not be recalled, if you wish me to be happy."

"I do, Flo, so do just as you please, for you are a good little girl after all."

"And you won't bring any other wife here?"

"No, indeed."

"Bless you, Jack," she said, and she kissed him, he little believing that it was a kiss from lips then breathing a curse upon him.

Having gotten the permission from her husband, to masquerade as a Danite, Flo at once formed her plan of action.

She would dash about the city the following day, gather what information she could that would be of use to her, and also cut down and make, as well as she could, from one of the major's uniforms, a suit to fit Louise Leroy.

Then she would, the day following, get together a haversack of provisions, a belt of arms, and ride straight for the mountain cabin.

Once there, she would arrange to make old Batty and his wife prisoners, and then, accompanied by Louise Leroy in her Danite disguise, she would take the trail for Fort Bridger, which she knew, and then the sentinel who dared to halt them, would be the sufferer, for no man's life should stand between them and their escape.

Such was Flo's plot, and that she had the nerve to carry it out she knew, and she believed that Louise Leroy would prove equally as brave.

At any rate they would make the attempt, be the end what it might.

CHAPTER XLI.

CATCHING A TARTAR.

"VELL, mine frident, don't it pe a long vays to t'e Pird-cage, vat you calls him?" asked Buckskin Moses of his Danite escort, after the two had ridden together several miles.

"Yes, Dutchy, it is just down the mountain yonder, and up at the head of the valley; but I want you to stop here and look at the view," answered the Danite.

"Vat I vants to look at t'e view for!"

"Dat ish not pizzeness, mine frident."

"It is very pretty."

"Vell, put it don't pring me nodings."

"Oh, you has no heart, pard."

"Now jist look at that stream thar, meanerin' over ther mounting side, an' fallin' down ther precipice a couple o' hundred feet to jine t'other stream below in t'her valley."

"Don't you call that beautiful?"

"I calls it vater ant lant, ant trees, ant rocks, ant it don't pring me pizziness," was the practical reply.

"Well, as you talk business so much, I'll do ther same, so I'll just trouble you to hand over ther little cash that yer hev about yer clothes."

"Dat leetle vat?"

"Cash."

"Goolt?"

"Yes, gold."

"Vat I gives you goolt for?"

"To save your life."

"Mine Got! vat I ish done dat you talks like dat avay?" and the Jew began to tremble.

"Well, whatever you have done, I intend to take chances on your turning up missing, and rob you."

"You vill vat?"

"Rob you."

"Holy Isaac! don't you vas do such a things, mine frient," cried the Jew in dire alarm.

"Come, no nonsense, and out with your gold, or I will cut your throat from ear to ear."

"Fader Abraham! put I has got no monish."

"You lie."

"All my monish I ish spent for dese t'ings vat I hash to sell."

"You have some money, I knows."

"I hash a leetle monish, put I don't vant to spend it."

"Nor shall you, for I will spend it myself."

"Your frient vill tell dat you ish rob me, ant den t'e Brophet, Prigham Yoongs, vill make you die."

"No, I'll look arter that, Jew, for, after I rob you, I'll lay the act on Nick Foster, and as he has been up to some little acts of the kind, they'll believe my story."

"Put I vill tell dat ish vas you."

"Dead men tells no tales, they says, Jew."

"Put I ish not deaf?"

"But you will be."

"Holy Moses!"

"Come, out with your gold, quick!"

"Vill you not kilt me, if I gives you t'e goolt?"

"Yes."

"Dat ish very goot, mine frient."

"I loves my goolt, but I loves my life petter ash t'e goolt."

"I don't doubt it."

"Now give me the gold."

"It ish in dis pag."

As Buckskin Moses spoke he drew a buckskin bag from some pocket about his attire, and held it forth toward the Danite robber.

But just as the Danite's hand was about to grasp it, the bag dropped to the ground with a clinking sound, and the hand which had held it now grasped a small derringer pistol, cocked and presented straight at the breast of the robber, while Buckskin Moses said:

"Mine frient, I vants you to holt up your hants up pooty quick!"

The Danite was astounded, and having often heard the same demand before, though not expressed in the same words, he instinctively threw up his hands, while he cried out:

"Durn it, Jew, what does yer mean?"

"Pizzeness," was the calm response.

The Danite's eyes now fell upon the little derringer, and evidently not accustomed to seeing such a weapon, and looking upon it as a toy-pistol, while he yet had little confidence in the nerve of the Jew, he suddenly dropped his hands and leaned forward in his saddle to seize his enemy.

But it was the last act of his life; for the Jew's finger touched the trigger, and the large bullet went plowing its way through the body of the robber Danite.

With a groan he fell from his horse, clutching in his death-agony the very bag of gold which had caused him to lose his life.

Buckskin Moses very coolly dismounted, picked up the bag and replaced it in its former receptacle, and then was bending over the prostrate form of the Danite when he heard the clatter of hoofs.

At once he was on his guard, but a glance down the trail showed him that it was Lieutenant Crichton approaching.

"I feared you were in trouble, Moses," cried the disguised dragoon, as he dashed up to the spot a revolver in hand.

"No, dat shentilmans vas in troubles, mine frient."

"Well, you are a terror on Danites, Buckskin, that is certain."

"He vant to rob me, ant dere he ish. He likes t'e peautiful scenery, mit t'e rivers running down t'e valleys, so I sent him dat avay quick."

Seizing the body in his arms with a strength that surprised Eugene Crichton, the Jew walked to the edge of the fall and hurled it over.

"He vill go down pooty quick."

"Now ve hash a horse, so vat ve do mit him?"

"I will lead him on to the cabin, for he may be needed."

"But where is the cabin?"

"Down t'e valleys; I show you pooty quick," and again mounting, Buckskin Moses rode on, Eugene Crichton riding ahead and leading the horse of the dead Danite.

A ride of half a mile down the mountain-side and the little valley came in view, with the cosey little cabin nestling away in the shadow.

"We have found the Bird-cage, Moses!" cried the dragoon, in a tone of exultation.

"Dat ish so, ant ve now vants to fint t'e pird," was the reply of the Jew, as the two rode toward the cabin.

CHAPTER XLII.

FRIENDS UNDER FALSE FACES.

AGAIN was Louise Leroy surprised in an afternoon siesta, by the arrival of a mounted Danite.

A glance, as she arose from the hammock, was sufficient to show her that it was the one who had before brought her the letter from Major De Lee, in fact, she knew that it was none other than Fiora in disguise.

Her heart gave a great bound of delight and hope, for she felt that the young Mormon wife had come to tell her of the time when they could escape.

She glanced about for Batty, and not seeing him, said:

"You are here again, and—"

A warning gesture from the pretended Danite showed that either Batty or his wife were in hearing, and Louise continued:

"And I suppose you again bring me a letter from Major De Lee?"

"Yes, lady, I bring you a letter," was the answer, and dismounting, Flora stepped forward and handed a letter to the maiden, who quietly walked to the rustic seat, and sat down before she broke the seal.

At a respectful distance Flo followed her, and stood near, as though awaiting an answer.

Opening the letter, Louise read:

"MY DEAR LOUISE:—

"I have planned to leave with you to-night.

"As soon as I ride away ask old Batty for some wine, for there is plenty of it in the cabin.

"Place the powders inclosed in two glasses, and ask Batty and Bess to join you.

"The powder will do them no other harm than putting them to sleep for a few hours.

"In a short while I will return, and then, as soon as you can get ready, we will start, for I have for you a complete Danite suit, and, as you doubtless know, there are horses in the stable.

"With hope of our success,

"Yours,

"FLO."

"Say to Major De Lee, your chief, I will do as he says," replied Louise, in a tone loud enough to be heard by Batty, who was now seated on the front-door step.

"No written answer, lady?" asked the pretended Danite.

"None."

Flo then bowed, turned, and mounting her horse, rode away.

For a few minutes Louise sat there in silence, and then she called out:

"Batty, is there any wine in the cabin?"

"Yes, lady."

"Will you get some for me?"

"What kind will you drink, lady, for we have Port, Sherry, and Madeira?"

"Give me Port, please."

Batty soon came out with a bottle of Port, and a corkscrew, while Bess brought a salver with a glass upon it.

Louise took a glass of wine, which was poured out for her, and then said:

"Get glasses, Bess, for yourself and Batty, for I care for no more."

Batty looked as though he would enjoy a

glass of wine immensely; but his wife spoke up somewhat sharply:

"No, miss, I seldom takes anything strong, and it's not good for Batty, for it goes to his head and makes a fool of him."

"But, old woman, one leetle glass hain't going to hurt me," pleaded old Batty.

"It is the one leetle glass that does, for once you take that you wants more."

"Surely, Bess, I favor temperance, but this wine is delicious, and will really do you both good," said Louise, just then a strong advocate of intemperance.

"Hear that, old woman; it will put fat on our old bones, and raise the cockles of our heart."

"I guess jist a leetle glass hain't going to down me."

"I say no, old man, and if you takes the wine, I'll jist pull the cord and signal for 'em to come down from the camp," said Bess firmly.

That settled it, and Batty said no more, while Louise was thwarted in her little plot, so she could only await the coming of Flora, and then see what could be done.

It was not long before the young wife came back at a canter.

Her eyes falling upon old Batty and his wife, she knew that something had gone wrong and she at once said:

"I saw the major, lady, and he sent me back to say that he would soon be with you."

"And, Batty, he told me to tell you and your wife to have the best dinner ready that it was in your power to get, for he is as hungry as a bear."

"All right, my man."

"Do you hear the chief's orders, old woman?" replied Batty.

"I does, and I'll do as he says; come, bustle about old man, and help me all you can, for if I'd have let you take that wine, a pretty fool you'd have been to meet the major."

Batty thought so, too, for he knew he had a failing, if once he took a drink of liquor or wine, and he mentally thanked the old woman for saving him from himself.

"Come, my man, I guess you can help a leetle too, for there is much to be done," he said to Flora.

"I will have work to do when the chief comes," coldly replied Flora, and then, as her eyes fell upon some one approaching, she continued:

"What is it that the Danite has captured?"

Her remark referred to Buckskin Moses and the supposed Danite, who just then came along the mountain-trail toward the house.

In spite of their haste, old Batty and his wife stopped to see who were the new-comers, and Bess called out:

"It's a peddler, and now we can get some things to make us look smart."

"Is Miss Leroy here?" asked the young dragoon, halting near the cabin with Buckskin Moses, and fixing his eyes upon the maiden.

"I am Miss Leroy, sir; what is it you wish?"

Naughtily responded Louise.

"Major De Lee sent me hither with this Jew peddler, as he said that he had wares which you might wish to purchase."

"Yesh, mish, I hash plenty of rippions, laces, kerchiefs, nick-nacks, mit fine dings dat's suited to de ladies."

"I shows you vat I hash mit my packs, mish, ant all ish so sheap ash never vas for dish time o' season, ant so far awav from home."

But Louise met the request rather coldly, while old Bess was really wild with fear that she might not make the peddler unfold his treasures.

"You better get the supper for the major, Bess, you and Batty, for he is in no pleasant mood to-day," said Flora, anxious to get the old couple away, so that the Danite and Jew would depart, for she feared that the major might be somewhere in the neighborhood, and had really sent the peddler there.

Batty and Bess, who stood in holy horror of the Danite chief, at once took the hint, and hustled away about their work, while Louise, seemingly understanding Flora's motive, asked:

"Where did you leave Major De Lee, sir?"

"Some half-dozen miles from here, and, I think, bound upon the northern trail, lady," was the answer of Eugene Crichton, and he eyed Flora with a searching glance, while he continued:

"As the lady doubtless wishes to see the Jew's goods, my lad, you come with me to

look after the horses, for I shall await here for some time."

Flora knew not what to say, and could but obey, and the two walked away together, while the Jew at once said to Louise, who was becoming very uneasy:

"Vel, leddy, I ish glat in my soul to meets you," said Moses.

"I am sorry I cannot reciprocate the feeling, sir," was the haughty reply.

"Dot ish pad, mish; put don't you get excited ven I tells you dat t'e Danite yonder ish not a Danite, put a frient mit you wit a false face on."

"What do you mean?" quickly and excitedly asked Louise.

"Don't got excited, mish, for t'e olt beoples hev eyes mit t'ere heats."

"Keep so cool ash you vas ice-cream."

"I am cool, I am not excited, so tell me what you mean."

"Does you pe acquainted mit a chentilmens vat vas a dragoon sold'er?"

"Yes, oh, yes!"

"Hish name vas vat?"

"Lieutenant Eugene Crichton—or, perhaps you mean my uncle, Colonel Lewellyn?"

"No; I don't means your uncles, put I means t'e yoong mans."

"Lieutenant Crichton?"

"Yesh, mish."

"Oh, tell me why you speak of him."

"Don't I done told you dat t'e Danite vas a friend mit a false face?"

"Quick! speak! is the man who came here with you, and dressed in Danite uniform, Lieutenant Eugene Crichton?" and Louise spoke in a low, earnest tone, her face flushing and paling the while.

"Dat vas so."

"Then quick, sir, and go after him, for he has led the one he found with me away, believing her to be a Danite, and he may harm her."

"Quick, for it is a woman."

"Holy Isaacs! I go me right avay quick," and Buckskin Moses hastened down toward the log-stable, whither the two had gone, each one believing the other to be a *bona fide* Danite.

The Jew arrived just in time, for, though conversing with Flora in an ordinary manner, Eugene Crichton was planning the best way to get rid of one whom he considered a young Danite.

"Mine frients, I vas sent py t'e laties, for she says dot t'e yoong mans vas a yoong womans."

"What do you mean, Moses?" quickly asked Eugene Crichton.

"I vas mean dot I tells her dot you vas t'e dragoon officer in disguise, ant then she tells me to roon pooty quick ant tells you dot t'e yoong mans vas a womans ant her frients."

"Hal you, then, are no Danite," cried the officer, turning upon Flora and dropping his hand upon her shoulder.

"If I understand the Jew aright, sir, you are also wearing false colors," was the quick reply.

"I am, and I have come here to rescue Miss Leroy from her captivity, and I warn you—"

"No need to warn me, sir, for I came here for that same purpose."

"Holy Isaacs! I vas all proke up mit surprise," said Buckskin Moses.

"Who are you, may I ask?" was the question from the dragoon.

"Ah, sir, I am a Danite's wife, and one who was cruelly deceived into marrying a man I believed to have honor, and whom I have only just found was a Mormon."

"Indeed! you have my deepest sympathy, and if you will fly from here with Miss Leroy, I shall be only too happy to offer my protection, for I am Lieutenant Eugene Crichton of the Light Dragoons."

"I thank you, sir, and gladly will I go, for I had come from my home in Salt Lake City, disguised as I am, and brought with me a Danite dress for Miss Leroy, so that we might fly together to-night."

"God bless you for that, madam; but now let us lose no time, for we have to get rid of the old man and his wife in some way, or are they friendly?"

"No, indeed, sir; but you can capture them and leave them bound in the cabin."

"That we will do, so, Moses, you had better go back and inform Miss Leroy of our plan, and I will enter the cabin, under some excuse, and make the old couple prisoners."

"Then we can start on our flight, as soon as Miss Leroy has robed herself as a Danite, for, in that disguise alone can she escape."

"One moment, mish."

"Does you know Major De Lee, t'e Danite chief?" asked Buckskin Moses.

"I know him alas too well, sir, for he is the one who brought me here under such a cruel deception."

"I am his wife, sir," almost fiercely answered Flora.

"Did you know hish oder vifes, another ones whose heart he probe?"

"I know that he was married once before, or at least he admits that much."

"Ant his vifes?" eagerly asked the Jew.

"Is dead."

"Ahi! you ish know dat, mish?"

"I do, for a servant in his house was with her when she died, and she told me that the poor young woman had been deceived by Jack De Lee, as I had been, and wilted away like a flower until death gave her rest."

"I felt so sorry for the poor young wife, that I rode out to visit her grave but yesterday, for I knew not but that my fate might be like hers."

"Dit you know her names, mish?" again asked Buckskin Moses, and his voice trembled.

"Yes, she was a Jewess, from Baltimore, I believe, and her maiden name you will find on this locket, which has also her miniature, and which I took from the house of De Lee to return it to her friends, for I felt that it was desecration to leave it there."

She handed him a gold locket as she spoke, having taken it from her pocket, and grasping it the Jew gazed upon the face an instant, and the words came from his lips, as though wrung by anguish:

"Salome Lindo—my poor, poor sister."

"May th' curse of Abraham rest upon your murderer, living and dead!"

The strange dialect had gone from him wholly, and turning to Eugene Crichton, after an effort of self-control, he said hoarsely:

"Lieutenant Crichton, that man, Jack De Lee, stole from us the pride of our name and household."

"Months ago, after having been mining in the western country for several years, I heard that my sister, Salome, had wedded a Danite, and that he had cruelly deceived her as to who he was."

"I swore revenge against him and also to take her from him, and hence I came here as you now see me."

"Salome is dead, and may her ashes rest in peace until some day when I can have her body taken home."

"But Jack De Lee yet lives, and I shall not rest content until he is dead."

"Now come, and I will aid you in your flight and then take the trail of the Danite chief and follow it to the end of his life or mine."

The man spoke with the utmost calmness, and in looking upon him both the dragoon and Flora forgot his eccentric appearance.

"From my heart I feel for you, my friend, and all the aid I can give you in hunting down De Lee you shall have."

"I know it, Crichton, I know it; but now come, let us rescue these poor ladies, and to do so I am once more Buckskin Moses," and the Jew returned to where he had left Louise and quickly told her how matters stood, while Eugene Crichton and Flora entered the cabin, and presenting their revolvers suddenly at the heads of the old couple readily made them prisoners.

Ten minutes later four persons wearing the Danite uniform rode away from the little cabin, in which they left Batty and his wife so securely bound that it would take them a long time to untie the knots.

The Jew's pack, rawboned steed and mule were given to the old couple to soothe their wounded feelings, while, mounted upon the horse of the Danite he had killed upon the mountain, and wearing a uniform he had in his pack, Luke Lindo rode by the side of Flora, as Eugene Crichton and Louise led the way on their flight from the Mormon lines.

CHAPTER XLIII.

AN OATH THAT WAS KEPT.

FOR severⁿ miles the quartette of supposed Danites, held on their way, the two men ready to fight their way through any danger.

Eugene Crichton had not taken a rapid gait, for he would not press the horses, not knowing what they might be called upon to do.

Arriving at the inner line of guards they were promptly halted by a Danite sentinel, and as promptly the young dragoon gave the requisite signals.

The second line was passed in the same way, and then they knew that they had but one more gantlet to run.

Where the outer line of guards were, neither Eugene Crichton or Luke Lindo knew; but they pressed on more rapidly, to suddenly come upon a sentinel in the middle of the trail.

His challenge was answered as before, and they were about to pass on, when a party of half a dozen horsemen dashed up, and a stern voice demanded:

"What party is that going out of the lines without my orders?"

"It is Jack De Lee," whispered Flora, and at her words Luke Lindo said quickly:

"Ride on, Crichton, with the ladies, and I will join you."

Instantly Flora stretched forth her hand, to grasp the rein of her companion, for she divined his object.

But she was too late, for he spurred forward, and halting in front of the horseman who had spoken, sternly asked:

"Are you Major Jack De Lee, the Danite chief?"

"I am, sir."

"Who are you that asks the question?" was the haughty reply.

"I am the brother of Salome Lindo, and I am here to avenge her."

"Die! dog of a Danite!"

There was a flash and a sharp report, and the Danite chief uttered a cry of anguish and despair, and fell from his saddle, while, in the confusion that followed, the daring Hebrew spurred to the side of Flora, and hoarsely cried:

"On, Crichton, for our lives, on!"

No second bidding was needed, and while Flora went in advance with Louise, the young dragoon dropped back alongside of Luke Lindo, and with their weapons ready awaited the pursuit they knew must follow.

For full a minute, a precious minute of time to the fugitives, the Danites were unnerved; but then they darted off in pursuit, full a score in number.

Well mounted, the fugitives held their own, and a running fight along the starlit trail began.

Now and then a bullet would whistle unpleasantly near their heads, and seeing this, to protect their fair companions, Crichton and Lindo slackened their pace, that they might ride on.

But both Flora and Louise saw their motive, and also drew rein, for they would not leave them.

And thus the flight and pursuit went on, until the horse ridden by Eugene Crichton was wounded, and could go no further.

"Spring up behind me!" cried Lindo, and Eugene Crichton obeyed.

But the noble animal could not make great speed under a double load, and Luke Lindo said:

"As my foolhardy act brought you in danger, Crichton, ride on with the ladies, and I will make a stand."

Instantly he sprung from the saddle and stood at bay.

But Eugene Crichton was no man to desert a comrade, nor would Flora and Louise hear to it, and he too turned back, just as the Danites were charging on.

"I'll stand by you, Lindo, come what may," shouted the dragoon.

"Lieutenant Crichton's voice among a hundred.

"Come, Jim Bridger, let ther devils have it!"

The voice came from the side of the road, and out of the shadow sprung two forms, rifles in hand.

"Daring Dave and Jim Bridger, by the Gods of War!" shouted Eugene Crichton.

"Ay, we is here, every time!" cried the scout, and together the four men ranged across the trail, and their rifles flashed together.

It was a deadly volley, for four Danites bit the dust, and then their revolvers opened lively and the charge was checked, the battle was won, for the enemy believed that they were rushing upon a body of cavalry, as in trumpet tones Eugene Crichton shouted:

"Dragoons, charge, and ride them down!"

Pell-mell in mad flight the Danites retreated, while the party of fugitives went on their way,

Daring Dave explaining that they were off no a scout and had an idea that something was wrong when they saw Danites chasing Danites.

"And the prisoner?" asked Luke Lindo, quickly.

"Oh!" he tried to get away one night, and would have done so had not Jim Bridger here fetched him down with a shot," answered Daring Dave.

"But where is the Jew, my pard of the Overland, whom I christened Buckskin Moses?" he continued.

"I am t'e shentilmans, mine frient Tave," put I don't vas Puckskin Moses some more now," answered Luke Lindo to the amazement of Dave and Jim Bridger, the latter remarking:

"Waal, pard, you can out-Jew a reg'lar Jew, or I are a liar."

"I am a Jew myself, Jim; but come, let us go to the cavern, get the horses and gold, and strike for the camp of General Johnson, for my idea is that the Danites will press on in force."

This advice was taken, and with their horses weighed down with the gold, which belonged to Flora, they rode into Camp Douglass just at dawn, when Colonel Lewellyn was just preparing to start out with his regiment to look up his lieutenant, and also to demand, under flag of truce, the restoration of his niece.

What joy reigned in the camp at the return of those believed to be captives or dead, the reader can readily imagine, as he can also that Louise Leroy loved Eugene Crichton even more after the perils he had gone through for her sake, and shortly after became his wife, the marriage taking place at Fort Bridger, and the post chaplain performing the ceremony, while Luke Lindo and Flora Dean, for she had resumed her maiden name, stood up with the happy couple.

But the reader does not know, that after one year the lovely Flora, the widow of Jack De Lee the Danite chief, was won and wedded by Luke Lindo, no longer ugly Buckskin Moses, but, with his disguise taken off, a handsome, dashing young man of whom Jim Bridger the scout said to Daring Dave:

"He are as squar' a man as ever I seen, hes got ther narve ter fight a regiment, an' are as good a trailer as a Injun, while he has got money ter throw to ther birds, an' ef that putty gal-widder hain't happy with him, then she sh'd marry Brigham Young."

THE END.

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